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CEREBUS

LATTER DAYS 16

And came to passe

281
AUG

Blake Bell

Dear Mr. Bell:
Thank you for your letter of 10 June requesting my participation in the book you are "authoring" for TwoMorrows Publishing, *I Have to Live With This Guy!* The quote that you attribute to me in your letter, that "there are no small Dave Sim controversies" was either a) manufactured by a *Comics Journal* "journalist" or b) was misattributed to me but was possibly said by Gerhard (Gerhard was the one who spoke to the "journalist" in question after the "journalist's" attempt to make a Colleen-Doran-sized-mountain out of a "plagiarism" molehill came—much to the *Journal*'s ill-concealed regret—to nothing. I was out of the studio at the time and was informed of the *Journal's* failed fishing expedition via a post-it note on my drawing board). For the record, I think *all* Dave Sim controversies are miniscule and it is only the fact that feminists are so narrow and parochial in the scope of their interests (limited as those interests are to feminism, left liberal quasi-socialism, et al) that makes Dave Sim controversies *seem* large to them. Just as a bread crumb assumes formidable proportions in the eyes of an ant.

I'm afraid that I have very little to say about Deni's contributions to Aardvark-Vanaheim, *Cerebus* or my artistic process(es?). What little I had to say I wrote in a series of essays entitled "Why an Aardvark?" the last installment of which I have yet to complete and publish. Feel free to use any of the information contained therein, with or without attribution. I'm not sure what issues they were in but I'm sure you'll agree that a little research is not wholly incompatible with the business of "authoring".

I will state—for the record—that when I knew Deni (two decades ago, now) she had a pronounced tendency to…mix up…her stories. Not *intentionally* (at least, I like to *think* it was not intentional), but it was far from unusual to find her relating an anecdote where the ending had changed from the last time she told it, or onto which she had grafted a sequence from a television show she had seen recently, or which suddenly featured a new cast of characters. I would be happy to review your interview with her and identify those…composite elements?... that I recognize but since I'm sure that all her Dave Sim stories have undergone any number of revisions over the last two decades and (having no idea what television programs she had been watching at the time of your interview) I can't promise that I would even recognize what she is purporting to recall.

I note (with great amusement) two things: one, that I am the only *ex*-husband to be included in your book, and two, the fact of my inclusion refutes your chosen title. Clearly no woman…*or* even Ed Sedarbaum…*has* to "live with that guy," as Deni proved almost twenty years ago when she, in fact, chose not to.

Dave Sim

PS: I'm still waiting (14 months later) for a point-by-point feminist refutation of the "16 Impossible Things to Believe Before Breakfast" (*Cerebus* 265). Maybe when one of you finishes sniffing around my personal life from twenty years ago?

CEREBUS
NO. 281 AUGUST 2002

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Creator, Writer
Characters/
pencil & ink,
mechanical tones,
lettering

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Background
Artist/pencil & ink

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LATTER DAYS

•
PROLOGUE
(Cerebus 266
and 267)
•
BOOK ONE
(Cerebus 268 to
288)
•
BOOK TWO
(Cerebus 289 to
300)

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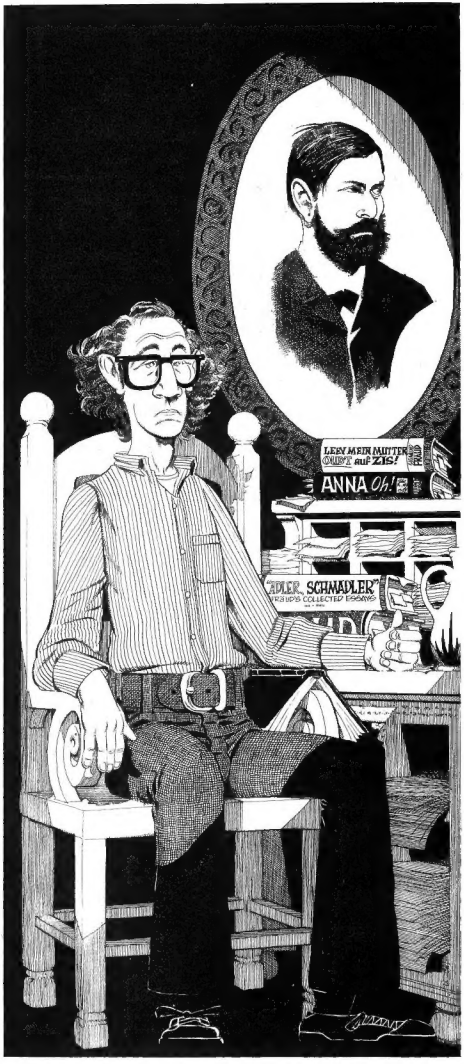


25th of Wintermonth 71- Can it really be almost a year since I've written in these pages? Scattered around me stacks and stacks of preliminary notes - many of them undated - haunting reminders of the futility of these last four months:

(Undated) - Dr Fraud has observed: "this Ego Libido can only become accessible to psychoanalytic study if its psychic energy is invested (cathexis) in sexual objects." Cathexis [Anc. Detrusion~Cathexo: "to occupy" (contrast w. Catheflexo: "to sublet." See also ~ Cathedyslexo: "to rent by the hour")]

(Undated) - I continue to search my own Remarks and Memory Symbols for Psychic Traumata - a dog drinking out of a glass or a black snake coming through a wall..... nothing, comes to me. The bank account of my psyche is overdrawn, drained of its emotional currency which I have traded for the colourful painted "chips" of my faith in Dr Fraud's teachings. Hoping that the Casino of my Super-Ego will accept them "at par," I struggle to remember if the white ones or the blue ones are worth twenty-five and whether it's a good idea to "stand" on "soft seventeen." My Inner Affective Resistances having slowed my self-analysis to a standstill, I'm reduced to sublimating my aggression by sadistically torturing my metaphors.

(Undated) Reading, Part III wherein Dr Fraud discusses the Splitting of Consciousness: "Our experiences in this matter are nothing new: among hysterics, one may meet persons of the clearest intellects, the strongest wills, the greatest principles and of the subtlest minds," I notice that he has switched from referring to himself in the first person plural to the third person singular in the space of a single paragraph. One is probably just trying to make one's reader feel included but, at another level, I suspect we might be trying to tell us something.

(5th of Steve 70) - I dream that I am Elizabeth Von R.: Dr Fraud— in the words of his Epicrisis to that famous history— is explaining to me that "the independence of Em'l nature was reaching beyond the womanly ideal, manifesting itself in obstinacy, pugnaciousness and shut-in-ness." He applies pressure to my head and tells me to describe the first thing I see. I reply, "I see that it would have been better for the translator to have used an *actual* word— like 'reclusion'— rather than a fabricated composite non-term like 'shut-in-ness'." I awake to find my imaginary night'ie drenched in sweat and my imaginary scented baby powder adhering, in pasty little white clumps to the lace frills of its imaginary arm-holes.

(Undated) Following Bernheim's example of forcibly awakening apparently forgotten impressions through somnambulism, I INSIST to myself that I DO know what my Prerequisite Psychic Traumata are! And that I WILL recall them! IN detail! NOW! This INSTANT! Despite slapping, myself around for a good half hour, constantly screaming "SCHNELL, vermin, SCHNELL!" I stick to my original story: I know nothing and suspect even less. In answer to my snarled threat that "I can *RUN*, but I can't *HIDE*," I proceed to do both; in the process setting my treatment back by *months*.

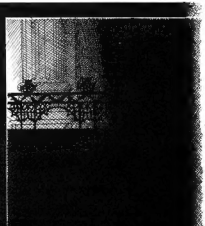
5th of Springmonth- Dr Fraud's assertion that "the homestead of the Ego is the Libido" leaves me disconcerted. I was CERTAIN that the homestead of the Ego was the HOMESTEAD (with a quilted comforter, preferably). To me, the homestead of the LIBIDO is the five-star restaurant and the bordello (quilted comforter optional). While returning my copy of Fraud's *Frauenslaute* to the Clothing Hut, I accidentally-on-purpose brush my upper arm against a copy of C.G. Jungfrau's *Ise Das a Ubershcweres Geschütz in Dein Kessel?* I return home feeling cheap and tawdry, but also strangely exhilirated.

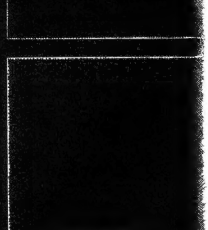
7th of Springmonth 71 - I awaken in the middle of the night from a dream which has provided the solution I've been seeking. In a half-conscious state, I scribble it down in the notepad I keep next to the petroleum jelly in my nightstand. The next morning, it turns out to be complete gibberish: "Exterior. Street scene. Wide angle. Passerby right to left. Exits frame. *All voice over* (this is important) *Forty seconds*: K'berg reciting *pre-written notes*. K'berg arrives mid-frame: one minute approx. *post-sync* recitation to *rec. sound*. Dolly left following K'berg approx. twenty feet approach teen sec. Freeze frame. K'berg exits frame left prior to 'while simultaneously enjoying etc.' *Possible to shoot seven pages in one afternoon*."

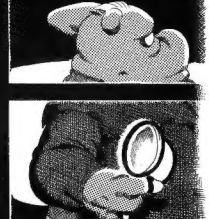
8th of Springmonth 71 - Although I'm only supposed to be crossing the courtyard to the Sanctuary, I find myself— for no discernible reason— halfway down Two-Mile Road, contemplating the Etiology of my Chronic Masturbation. I'm a great believer in Etiology: the Science of Root Causes. For it is only through focussing on the *origins* of a given Id Tendency —instead of focussing on the Id Tendency *itself*— that we enable ourselves to, both, fully understand the *nature* of that Id Tendency...

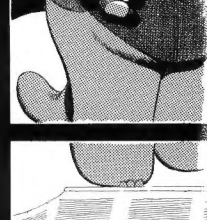
...while, simultaneously, enjoying it many times a day.

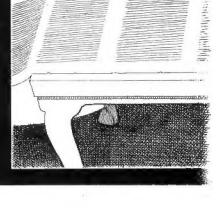
O, YOOHWHOO! BELIEVE!
O, YOOHWHOO! BELIEVE!
O, YOOHWHOO! BELIEVE!
O, YOOHWHOO! BELIEVE!
THUMP
WHAMP!!
THUMP
BE.
LIEVE.
O, YOOHWHOO! BELIEVE!
O,
YOO.
THUMP
WHOO.
O, YOOHWHOO! BELIEVE!
O, YOOHWHOO! BELIEVE!
WHUMP











Cerebus:
Oh, aye. Razor strops. They used to work on Cerebus when he was a kid, so Cerebus figured they would work on Yoohwhoo. [thinks] And they *have*. There didn't used to be *any* vegetation around the Sanctuary.

Konigsberg:
You mean…you *told* them to do that?

Cerebus:
Aye. They're "subduing the earth". Like it said in the first chapter of the First Book of Moshe that men were *supposed* to do.

Konigsberg:
But…but…they're saying…"O, *Yoohwhoo*! Believe!"

Cerebus:
Aye.

Konigsberg:
But…but…*I thought*…that is…[thinks] Didn't you say that Yoohwhoo was…the *ineffable name of God!?*

Cerebus:
Nay. *You* said Yoowhoo was the ineffable name of God. [thinks] See, Yoowhoo only *thinks* she's God.

Konigsberg:
Yoohwhoo *thinks* she's God.

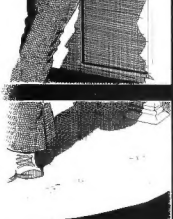
Cerebus:
Aye. See, Yoowhoo is [refers to the first chapter] "*the beast of the earth*". Yoowhoo is the separated part of God or part of God's Spirit that's *inside* the earth. She's a…a…*great light* [thinks] or a…a…*great fire* [thinks] or *both*…in the *middle* of the earth. Like the sun, but much, much smaller.

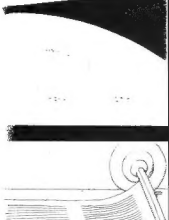
Konigsberg:
So *why* does she think she's God?

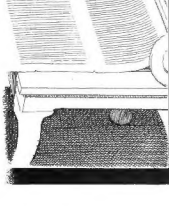
Cerebus:
Bad fruit.

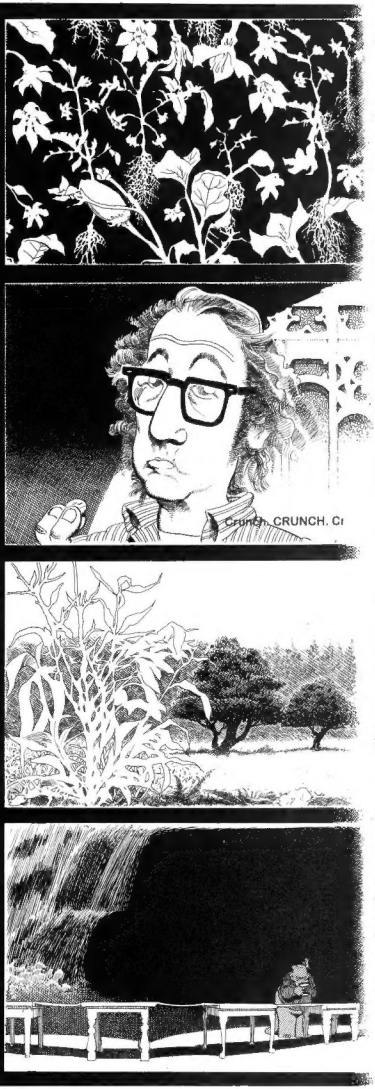
Konigsberg:
Bad *fruit?*

Cerebus:
Listen, why don't you just…let Cerebus tell you this from the beginning. That's why Cerebus invited you over here, right? Because Cerebus is *finally* ready to dictate his commentaries on chapters two and three and four and five. [clears throat]. Okay. So God has finished telling his side of the story and then he basically says, "Okay, Yoohwhoo. If *you're* God, if you're *Yoohwhoo* God, tell Me: how do *you* remember everything getting started?" Which really throws Yoohwhoo for a loop. You ever listen to a woman tell a story *after* she's been thrown for a loop? It sounds a *lot* like this one. So, anyway, Yoohwhoo says, "*These the generations of the heauens, & of the earth, when they were created; in the day that the Yoohwhoo God made the earth, and the heauens…*" Note that—right off the bat—according to Yoowhoo God—*she* made everything in *one* day, unlike the *six* days that it took God to accomplish the same thing. Also—according to Yoohwhoo God—there's only *one* earth, but there's *more than one* heaven. How *many* heavens Yoohwhoo God is not prepared to say at this time but—according to Yoohwhoo God—there is more than one heaven, plural, as in "heavens". Yoohwhoo God goes on: "*And euery plant of the field, before it was in the earth, and euery herb of the field before it grew…*" See, right there, that's how you know that this is the earth—the living thing *inside* the earth—



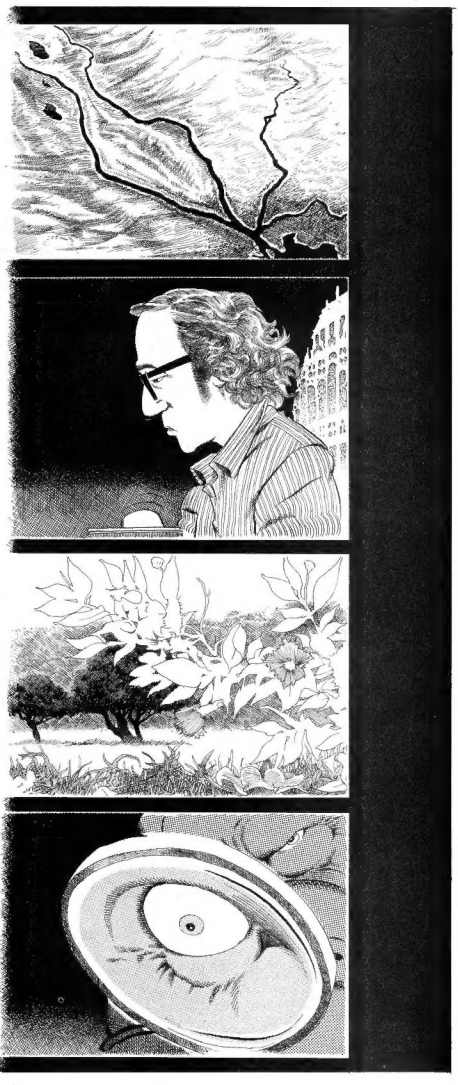






talking. What's the first thing she mentions? The plants and the herbs. What's the *only* thing the earth was able to produce on her own? Plants and herbs. Only—according to Yoohwhoo God—*she* created them *before* they were in the earth. Cerebus isn't sure what that *means* but this is Yoohwhoo God's story and she's sticking with it, "*...for the Yoohwhoo God had not caused it to raine vpon the earth, and there not a man to till the ground.*" You ever been married? No? This [sighs] this is what a conversation with a *wife* is like. "for *the Yoohwhoo God had not caused it to raine vpon the earth...*" That...*"for"*...in there just *kills* Cerebus. As if the fact that Yoohwhoo God having *not* caused it to rain upon the earth somehow *explains* the plants and the herbs existing *before* they were in the earth. [thinks] When you're a husband, you learn to just stare off into the distance when you're facing that kind of logic. Yoohwhoo God goes on: "*But a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground.*" See. According to Yoohwhoo God, the earth didn't even *need* rain to make the plants grow. The earth just produced a...a...*mist* that watered the whole face of the ground. [looks intently at Konigsberg] Have *you* ever seen a mist come *up* from the earth that was *heavy* enough to water a bunch of plants? Nay, neither has Cerebus. Neither has *anyone*. Except, evidently, Yoohwhoo God. So! Thus far: Yoohwhoo God has created the heavens and the earth in one day, plants and herbs *before* they were in the ground, whatever that means, and then a...a...*mist* comes up from the ground. To water all the plants. The first thing *Cerebus* thought was "How can Yoohwhoo God *see* to do all this? There's no *light*!" Anyway: "*And the Yoohwhoo God formed man of the dust of the ground & breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a liuing soule.*" See, this is where you can see the problem that God is facing. God isn't visible, right? God is a Spirit. If he wants to *show* the earth something, he has to use the earth as a raw material to do it. So, God makes a man *from* the dust of the earth and what's the first thing the *earth* thinks? "Oh, *look* what *I* just made." "*And the Yoohwhoo God planted a garden Eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.*" *Again* with the plants. Yoohwhoo God is *very big* on plants. Only now there's a whole *garden* of plants and it's on the East side of someplace called Eden. "Eden?" Cerebus thought at this point, "Where did *Eden* come from?" "*And out of the ground made the Yoohwhoo God to grow euery tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food: the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and euill.*" Not another word about Eden or whether it was there all along or whether Yoohwhoo God made it but, next?...you guessed it...more *plants*. Including *trees*, this time. At *this* point, Yoohwhoo God has second thoughts about her "mist that went up from the earth and watered the face of the ground." Now that Yoohwhoo God has had a couple of verses to *think* about it, it turns out that it *wasn't* a mist that watered all the plants. It was a *river*. "*And a riuer went out of Eden to water the garden...*" A river? Out of *Eden*? Is Eden a *mountain*? An underground *spring*? A waterfall, *maybe*? And how the heck does a *river* water a *garden*, anyway? Did Yoohwhoo God create the *concept* of a river? Or did Yoohwhoo God just create *this particular* river? Shouldn't it be: "*And Yoohwhoo God* made *a riuer to go out from Eden*"? Or did the heavens and the earth—when Yoohwhoo God made them all in one day—just sort of come fully-equipped with rivers? This, evidently, is for Yoohwhoo God to know and for the rest of us not to find out. "*...and from thence it was parted, and became into foure heads.*" *Heads*? The river has *heads*? *Four* of them? How the heck does a

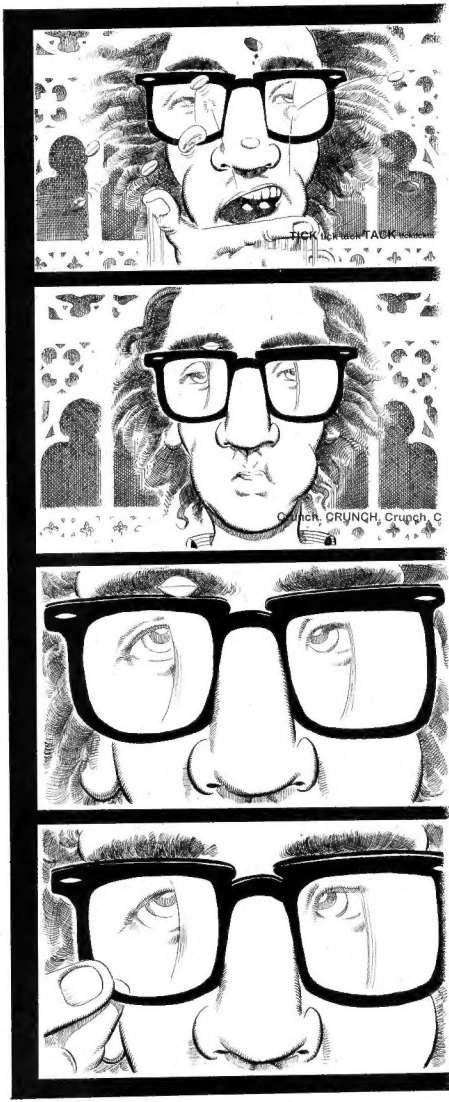
river "*become into*" four heads? And what the heck does "become into" *mean*? No idea, but guess what? The heads have *names*! *"The name of the first Pison: that it which compasseth the whole land of Hauilah, where is gold."* It was at this point that Cerebus got the definite impression that a certain element of…scope…was missing from Yoohwhoo's version of events. *"And the gold of that land good: There Bdellium and the Onix stone."* You know what Cerebus means? Like the next verse is going to tell you a great place to buy dish-towels and placemats. "*And the name of the second riuer Gihon: the same it that compasseth the whole land of Cush."* The second *river.* See, Cerebus thought we were talking about the *heads* that the river "*became into*". Never been married, eh? See, you learn to just nod and smile at this kind of stuff. The more you don't understand? The more you nod and smile. *"And the name of the third riuer Hiddekel: that which goeth toward the East of Assyria: and the fourth riuer is Euphrates."* At this point, the bell rings and we all get to *leave* geography class and go *back* to Ancient History class. *"And the Yoohwhoo God tooke the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dresse it, and to keepe it."* See, if you've never been married, at *this* point you would ask yourself, *self*? Why does Yoohwhoo God repeat verse 8 practically word-for-word here in verse 15? If you *have* been married—like *Cerebus* has—you just nod and smile and think, "Okay, *now* she's remembered where she was in the story *before* she got distracted by the part about the rivers." *"And the Yoohwhoo God commanded the man, saying, Of euery tree of the garden, eating thou shalt eate. But of the tree of the knowledge of good and euill, thou shalt not eate of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof, dying thou shalt die."* Okay, so basically Yoohwhoo God created the heavens and the earth in one day, all the plants and herbs *before* they were in the ground, formed a man out of the *dust* of the ground, planted a garden with a tree of *life* and a tree of *knowledge of good and evil*, *put* the man *in* the garden, and told him *not* to eat the fruit of the second tree or he would die. Well, [thinks] *That* certainly answers all of *Cerebus'* questions about how everything came to be. *"And the Yoohwhoo God said, It not good that the man should be alone: I will make him a helpe meet as before him."* As *before* him? There was a "help-meet" *before* the man? And what the heck is a "help meet," anyway? It's okay, Cerebus reminds himself, it's okay—just keep nodding and smiling. Which is getting difficult at this point because there are—*obviously*—you know, *major parts of the story MISSING here.* But…as Cerebus came to learn when he was *married:* if you just keep nodding and smiling, *most of the time—gradually,* but *eventually*— you *will* be *given* the missing pieces as you…*you* know…go along. Whereas IF, instead, you *yell really loud*, "YOOHWHOO GOD, WHAT IN THE *HECK* ARE YOU *TALKING ABOUT*?" All you're going to accomplish is to hurt her feelings and get her so upset she can't *remember* what she was talking about and she'll get all huffy and she won't talk to you for a few days. So: *"And out of the ground the Yoohwhoo God formed euery beast of the field, and euery foule of the aire and brought vnto the man, to see what he would call them: and whatsoeuer the man called euery creature, that the name thereof. And the man called names to all cattell, and to the foule of the aire, and to euery beast of the field: but for the man there was not found a helpe meete for him."* Aha! thought Cerebus (all of his nodding and smiling having finally paid off): It's a *compromise*! Remember when God tried to make the deal with the earth? To give the man and the-female-of-the-man dominion over everything *except* the whales? And the earth left out the earth and the



cattle? Well, this, evidently, is Yoohwhoo's attempt at a *counter*-offer: See, Yoohwhoo has already agreed to give the man and the female-of-the-man dominion over the beast of the field and fowl of the air. Now she *also* agrees to let him *name* the beasts of the field and the fowl of the air…*and to name* the cattle! "Trudy the cow, Morty the ram, Solly the sheep". Every one of 'em gets a *name*…and *the man* gets to pick 'em! Is getting to pick the *names* of the cattle the same as having "*dominion*" *over* the cattle?

Of course not! It's a *compromise*, which—in "marriage-ese"—means "not getting what you *asked for*, but getting—*instead*—something useless that you don't need and that you can't use for anything." *"…but for the man there was not found a helpe meete for him."* Maybe if we had some *idea*—some *clue* as to what a "help meet" *is*—we'd know where to look for one. *"And the Yoohwhoo God caused a deepe sleepe to fall vpon the man, and hee slept; and he tooke one of his ribs, and closed vp the flesh in stead thereof. And the rib which Yoohwhoo God had taken from man, builded hee a woman, & brought her vnto the man. And the man said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shalbe called woman, because shee was taken out of man."* Oh, o&*ay*! *Now*, Cerebus *gets* it. *This* is the Secret Origin of Yoohwhoo God. *Wo-man* was taken out of *man*, therefore? *Yoohwhoo God* was taken out of *God!* Which is pretty much what God said back in chapter one. God divided between the light and between the darkness. The only *difference* is that Yoohwhoo God thinks that *she's* the one doing all this. Which God has been trying to explain to her isn't so. A New God didn't come out of God. *Yoohwhoo's* relationship to *God* is the same as the relationship of the *grass* and the *herbs* and the *trees* to *Yoohwhoo*. The grass and the herbs and the trees are *alive*. The grass and the herbs and the trees are *good*. But they *aren't* Yoohwhoo. The same as *Yoohwhoo* is alive. *Yoohwhoo* is good. But *Yoohwhoo* is *not* God. [thinks] And Yoohwhoo isn't necessarily that *good*, either. Because the man—presumably speaking on behalf of Yoohwhoo, with a belly full of good-and-evil fruit—then says, *"Therefore shall a man leaue his father and his mother, and shall cleaue vnto his wife: and they shalbe one flesh."*

WHOA! Now, God is *definitely* going to have a *serious* disagreement with *that* one. *"And they were both naked, the man & his wife, and were not ashamed."* For Yoohwhoo, all of the cards are now on the table. Just as the *man* came out of *Yoohwhoo God* and is now ready to *leave* Yoohwhoo God…*and* God…and become *one flesh* with the little Yoohwhoo that just came out of *him*—in *Yoohwhoo God's* opinion—so…*TOO!*...should God now leave *His* Mother God *He* came out of and *His* Father God——and should *merge* with Yoohwhoo God so they can become *One Being*. See, the way *Yoohwhoo God* looks at it, that's what *Yoohwhoo God* wants, that's what *God* wants, *that's* what this *whole big show* with the man and his wo-man was all about, so, let's just get down to it, Big Guy, whattayasay? Now in between chapter two and chapter three, God throws Yoohwhoo for another loop by asking Yoohwhoo—the living thing inside the earth—Who told you that you're "naked," Yoohwhoo? Oops. See "naked" is a concept—knowledge, a specific *kind* of knowledge that falls into the category of "knowledge of good and evil". And there's only one way for Yoohwhoo to have *gained* that knowledge, the same way that she got the idea that she was a god: from the fruit that God told her not to eat. Now instead of saying, "Yes, God, I ate of the fruit of the tree that you told me not to eat." Instead of doing *that*, Yoohwhoo turns it into a Three Wise Fellows routine and asks the man: *"Who told thee thou naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree whereof I*

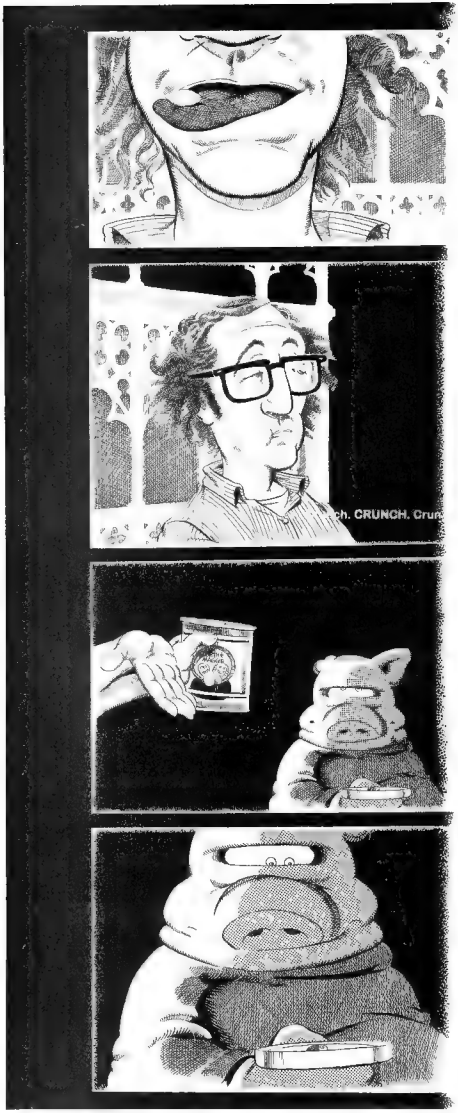


commanded thee, that thou shouldest not eat?" As if Yoohwhoo God doesn't *know*, right? And the man, of course, answers, "*The woman whom thou gavest with mee, shee gaue me of the tree and I did eate.*"

Double oops for Yoohwhoo. See, now we know what Yoohwhoo God meant by a "help meet as before him." Yoohwhoo—having eaten the bad fruit which led her to believe that she was a god—figured that *everyone* should eat the bad fruit and become gods. So she tells the man not to eat the fruit—the same as God told *her* not to eat the fruit. The irritating thing for Yoohwhoo was that *the man did what he was told: He didn't eat the fruit.* Obviously, thinks Yoohwhoo, the man needs a help meet or he's *never* going to eat the fruit and become a god. The animals are no good as "help meets" because they can't *talk* and—if they can't *talk*—they can't *tell* the man to eat the bad fruit. So that's when God—having a great sense of humour—helpfully extracts one of the man's ribs and builds a wo-man out of it.

God's little joke being: if you're looking for someone who won't do as she's told and will talk the *man* into *not doing* what *he* was told, a *man* isn't what you need. You need a *wo-man* for a job like that. Does Yoohwhoo confess *now*? Yoohwhoo? *Confess* to something? Hah!

Woopweopwoopwoop, she keeps the Three Wise Fellows routine going and *asks the wo-man,* the "*little* Yoohwhoo," "*What this thou hast done? And the woman said, The Serpent beguiled me, and I did eate.*" See, the "*little* Yoohwhoo" is on the spot, so *she* just makes something *up*. Think about it. Who's *she* going to blame? God? Yoohwhoo God? The man? So, she sees a snake and she says, "*That's* him. *That's* the one who told me to eat the fruit." For obvious reasons, this is fine by Yoohwhoo God. If "*little* Yoohwhoo" is off the hook, then *Big* Yoohwhoo is off the hook, too. A *talking snake?* thinks Big Yoohwhoo. Oh, of *course*. A talking *snuaake*! *How* could I have forgotten creating *those*? So, this is when Yoohwhoo back-pedals like crazy, trying to explain to God how the whole mess is *actually* the fault of a talking snake: "*Now the serpent was more subtill then any beast of the field, which the Yoohwhoo God had made,*" Yoohwhoo explains, managing—don't ask Cerebus how—to keep a straight face, "*and he said vnto the woman, Yea, because God said, Ye shall not eat of euery tree of the garden? And the woman said vnto the serpent, Wee may eate of the fruite of the trees of the garden: But of the fruite of the tree, which in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shal not eate of it, neither shall ye touch it lest ye die. And the Serpent said vnto the woman, Ye shall not surely die. For God doeth know, that in the day ye eate thereof, then your eyes shalbee opened: and yee shall bee as Gods, knowing good and euill. And when the woman saw, that the tree good for food, and that it a desire to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she tooke of the fruit thereof, and did eate, and gaue also vnto her husband with her, and hee did eate. And the eyes of them both were opened, & they knew that they naked, and they sewed figge leaues together and made themselues aprons. And they heard the voyce of the Yoohwhoo God walking in the garden in the wind of the day: and the man and his wife hid themselues from the presence of the Yoohwhoo God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Yoohwhoo God called vnto the man, and said vnto him, Where thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden: and I was afraid, because I naked, and I hid my selfe.*" And this is where Yoohwhoo does her Three Wise Fellows routine with the man and his little Yoohwhoo. She smacks the man in the face, the man smacks his wo-man in the face and the wo-man smacks the snake in the face. At which point, does Yoohwhoo—recognizing the *total silliness* of the situation—*now* confess to God? Of course not.



Instead, Yoohwhoo *uses her knowledge of good and evil to CURSE THE STUPID SNAKE!* *"Because thou has done this thou cursed above all cattel and above every beast of the field."* *Cursed* above *all cattle* and above *the beast of the field*? *WHAT DID THE STUPID CATTLE AND STUPID BEASTS OF THE FIELD DO?* Of course she can't go *too* far with this cursing business since *Yoohwhoo* knows that *God* knows what *actually* happened, so she tells the snake, *"upon thy belly shalt thou goe and dust shalt thou eate, all the daves of thy life."* Which, if you're a stupid snake—is, you know, pretty much a given. *"And I will put enmitie betweene thee and the woman and between thy seed and her seed."*

Which is where Cerebus first figured out that there was something *seriously wrong* with the story. A woman's *seed*? A woman doesn't *have* a seed. A woman [thinks about it]. a woman is *the box* the seed *grows in*. At this point, God speaks through Yoohwhoo the way Yoohwhoo has been speaking through the man: *"it shal bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his heele."* Which is, you know, God just making fun of Yoohwhoo. Listen, Yoohwhoo, as long as we're on the subject of *talking* snakes, how about a snake tall enough to *bruise your head*? Or you could bruise the talking snake's *heel*, Yoohwhoo. A snake hasn't *got* a heel? That's okay, a snake can't *talk*, either. *"Unto the woman he* (that is, Yoohwhoo) *said, I will greatly multiply thy sorowe and thy conception. In sorow thou shalt bring forth children"* which is, again, not much of a curse. If you're a woman, it's as much of a given as a snake crawling on his belly all the days of his life. So God steps in, again, and adds, *"thy desire to thy husband and hee shall rule ouer thee."* Which applies, presumably, to big *and* small Yoohwhoo's. God's trying to explain that Yoohwhoo's desire to be one flesh with God and to *be* God is what has gotten her in trouble. She'll continue to desire God, but God will rule over her. *"And vnto the man he said Because thou hast hearkened vnto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commaunded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eate of it cursed the ground for thy sake."* Can you believe it? The earth is saying, "*I'm* cursed and it's all *your* fault, you... you, *man*, you." Again, she knows she can't go *too* far with this, so she makes another non-curse. *"...in sorow shalt thou eate of it all the daves of thy life. Thornes also and thistles shall it cause to bud forth to thee and thou shalt eate the herbe of the field."* Cursed! By the Queen of the Vegetables! *"In the sweate of thy face shalt thou eate bread* And then she *really* gets vicious. *"...till thou returne vnto the ground for out of it wast thou taken, for dust thou, and vnto dust shalt thou returne."*

Konigsberg

How is that *vicious*? It's another non-curse, isn't it? Everyone dies *eventually*.

Cerebus

Not in the garden. Not Eastward of Eden, they don't. Cerebus is getting to that. First, Yoohwhoo has a little unfinished business: what she had been *leading up to* when the man was calling names to all the cattle and the beasts—before she got sidetracked so badly on "naked". *"And the man called his wives name Hawwa, because she was the mother of all liuing."* See, to Yoohwhoo, this would have been pretty darned clever. She'd let the man give names to the cattle as long as *the man* called *his wife* The Mother of All Living, *Hawwa*, which, to Yoohwhoo is "checkmate". If *Hawwa* is the Mother of All Living, then that makes God's *Mother* (who doesn't actually exist) the elder being "Hawwa", by the looks of it, is just a variation on *have* "to be". As in "Let there *be* light"

Konigsberg
Where did you get that from?

Cerebus
Rabbi No 51 "Haya or Not Haya"

Konigsberg
Feh Sorry I asked

Cerebus
You know Garth Innocent's *Rabbi*?

Konigsberg
Vaguely. My people could never figure out if he was being funny on purpose or accidentally. Like the "Shtetl of Solitude". A "shtetl" is a community, so "Shtetl of Solitude" is an oxymoron. Couldn't figure out if he made the mistake on purpose or if he was just another stupid goyim. No offense

Cerebus
None taken. So Yoohwhoo God

Konigsberg
Or the "seven-headed candelabra." I mean, it's got a name. It's called a *menorah*. Is it a big *tsimmis* to use the right name?

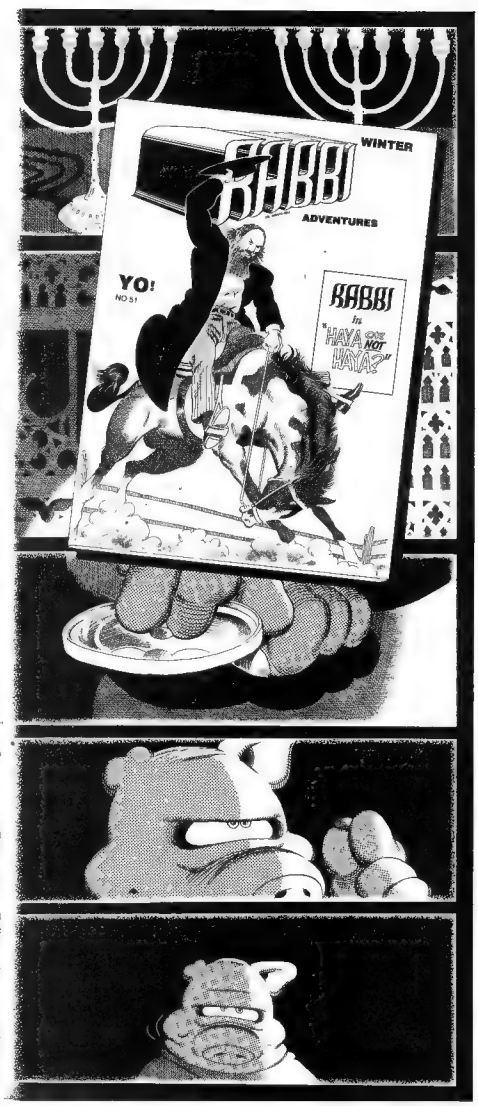
Cerebus
"Vaguely", huh?

Konigsberg
My forefathers would flip through them when they came out. You know, just to pass the time while they were hiding in the caves

Cerebus
Caves?

Konigsberg
Caves. Thickets. Rocks. High places. Pits. As the *schvartze* used to say. "Go for what you know." Actually, the goyim changed Hawwa's name to Eve

Cerebus
[laughs uproariously] Eve! As in "*Eve-ning*"?! [laughs uproariously again] as in "the *morning* and the *eve-ning*"?! [chuckles] That witch has no shame. [reads] Oh, right. Lest we doubt *that* for a minute. "*Unto Adam also and to his wife, did the Yoohwhoo God make coates of skinnes and cloathed them.*" Nyuck nyuck nyuck. *There's* a good "bad fruit" trick for the "Mother of all Living". *skinning animals* Okay, here comes the vicious part. "*And the Yoohwhoo God said, Behold the man is become as one of us to know good & evill. And now lest hee put foorth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eate and liue for euer.*" She doesn't even finish the thought. Obviously, *she* ate the fruit of *both* trees. The fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil told her that the fruit of the tree of life would make you live forever. As God said in chapter one, "*I haue giuen you euery herbe seeding seede which vpon the face of all the earth, and euery tree in the which the fruit of a tree yeelding seed, to you it shall be for meat.*" If Yoohwhoo and little Yoohwhoo and the man had just *stayed away* from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they could *all* have eaten the fruit of the tree of life that would make them live forever without ever knowing that it was the fruit of the tree of life that was doing it. It would have just been one of the many fruits they had available. Obviously, that's what God had *intended* to have happen. But, Yoohwhoo—having eaten the fruit of both trees—decides that it's a bad idea to have the man live forever. *Therefore the Yoohwhoo God sent him foorth from the garden of Eden, to till*



the ground, from whence he was taken. So he droue out the man and he placed at the East of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword, which turned euery way, to keepe the way of the tree of life.'

Konigsberg

Wait a minute, *wait* a minute Are you saying that Yoohwhoo drove the man and Hawwa *out* of the garden because.

Cerebus

Hawwa? Yoohwhoo didn't drive out *Hawwa.* Where did you get that idea?

Konigsberg

Right here *"So he droue out "*

Cerebus

Aye?

Konigsberg

' the man " [long pause] Well [thinks] See, everyone *knows* that [thinks some more] It's *common knowledge* that... [studies the text for a long time]. Ah! Here See? at the start of the *next* chapter, where Adam *knew* Hawwa his wife ..and .and. .she conceived

Cerebus

Sure Hawwa could go *out* of the garden to see Adam whenever she *wanted* Yoohwhoo called forth the Cherubims and the flaming sword to keep "the man" and all *other* males—*out* Not to keep the women females *in.* That's Yoohwhoo's idea of the "way of the tree of life." See, to *Yoohwhoo* it was the fault of "the man" that the earth was cursed. Of course, the earth was actually cursed by Yoohwhoo because she ate the forbidden fruit and then wouldn't admit that that was what she did. Who knows what would have happened if Yoohwhoo had just said, "Okay, God. I admit it. I ate the forbidden fruit I'm sorry Now what should I do?"? Nay, *Yoohwhoo's* idea of a solution is to keep "the man" and all *future* men *away* from the tree of life so they grow old and die and return to the dust of the ground [thinks] What did you think the part in the Fourth Book of Moshe—when Adam's descendents—your people -are being led back to the garden, back to the Promised Land, was about with Baalam and his talking donkey? God's sense of humour coming back to the garden. He wasn't saying that a talking animal wasn't *possible* just that Yoohwhoo wasn't capable of making one. Speaking through the talking donkey, God was reminding Yoohwhoo that she had to get rid of the Cherubim and the flaming sword if her Chosen People --the *male* half of her Chosen People, anyway—were going to get back in without getting turned into Chosen People Cutlets by Yoohwhoo's Angel and her flaming sword You know, the same Angel that Jacob had to wrestle with to get across the river The fact that he had four women—two wives and two concubines -is what saved *him* Four-against-one is definitely "keeping the way of the tree of life" as far as *Yoohwhoo* was concerned He, she, it, Yoohwhoo God as the elder represented by the two wives and the two concubines and God the younger represented by Jacob, the younger son who had stolen away the birthright and the blessing of the elder son. Esau [thinks for a few minutes]

Are you *sure* you've read these books?

Konigsberg

I'm beginning to wonder

Cerebus

So, okay *"And Adam knew Hawwa his wife, and shee conceiued, and bare Cain, and said I haue gotten a man from the Yoohwhoo* Nyuck nyuck nyuck "Says Yoohwhoo," that is Another example of "Oh, look what I just did!" A baby comes out of Hawwa? "I did that," says Yoohwhoo Same way that Yoohwhoo formed a man out of her own dust. and a wo-man out of the man's rib To Yoohwhoo it's just another little god Another little god like God and Yoohwhoo and Hawwa. *"And she again bare his brother Hebel, and Hebel was a feeder of sheep but Cain was a tiller of the ground And at the end of dayes "* Nyuck nyuck nyuck "At the end of days." See, Yoohwhoo wants to wrap up all of this "man-and-wo-man-littler-gods-coming-out-of-little-gods" stuff in a hurry and get back to the "becoming one flesh with God" part of the story Yoohwhoo's "desire being to her husband" and all *". .it came to passe, that Cain brought of the fruite of the ground, an offering vnto the Yoohwhoo "* Cain's a little confused It's *God* who gave men the herb of the field and the trees for meat *Yoohwhoo* as the next verse tells us -is a whole different being *"And Hebel, he also brought of the firstlings of his sheep, and of the fat thereof: and the Yoohwhoo had respect vnto Hebel and to his offering But vnto Cain and to his offring he had not respect and Cain was very wroth and his countenance fell* See, Yoohwhoo is getting vicious again To Yoohwhoo, Cain and Hebel are just more of the elder God, younger God stuff. Who *cares*? says Yoohwhoo Having already chosen to murder all the men, she approves of Hebel because *he's*

slaughtering cattle. *That's* the idea, says Yoohwhoo—let's kill all the men and the cattle and the rest of these crappy little beings and get back to God leaving Mother-God and Father-God and, hubba-hubba, cleaving unto me, Yoohwhoo God, his wife. Also remember that the man and the female-of-the man in God and Yoohwhoo's agreement *weren't* given dominion over the cattle. The cattle are off-limits. Taboo. So, Yoohwhoo is playing a dirty trick on man, approving of the slaughter *of* cattle *by* men. Which is what Hebel must've been doing, otherwise how did he offer Yoonhwoo the sheep *and* the fat? You have to *kill* a sheep—kill it and *mutilate* it—to get the fat out of it. Yoohwhoo is encouraging Cain to be like his brother Hebel and to mutilate cattle and offer them *to* Yoohwhoo. *"And the Yoohwhoo said vnto Cain, Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doe well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, synne croucheth at the door."* Meaning Cain's father, Adam. He *didn't* do well, so *he's* crouching at the "door," kept out of the garden by the Cherubim and the flaming sword. What Yoohwhoo is telling Cain is, play the game Yoohwhoo's way or out you go, buddy. *"And vnto thee his desire and thou shalt rule over him."* What Yoohwhoo is saying is that Cain and Hebel—as the next generation of elder god and younger god—have the same relationship as God and Yoohwhoo and Adam and Hawwa. What Yoohwhoo is telling Cain is that Hebel, because he's younger, desires Cain the same way Hawwa desires Adam and Yoohwhoo desires God and that, therefore—in Yoohwhoo's opinion—Cain and Hebel should be like husband and wife and should become one flesh. *"And Cain talked with Hebel, his brother: and it came to passe when they were in the field, that Cain rose vp against Hebel his brother, and slew him."* See, Cain told Hebel that—according to Yoohwhoo—Hebel desired Cain and Yoohwhoo thought that Cain and Hebel should become one flesh, man and wife. Hebel, who is your basic unquestioning brown-noser who is willing to do anything to please Yoohwhoo—as he has proven by his willingness to heartlessly kill and mutilate helpless cattle—said something along the lines of, "Well, uh, okay. Sounds good to me. Right here, right now?" Which, to say the least, is not the answer Cain was hoping for. Have you got any brothers?

Konigsberg
Me? No.

Cerebus
Neither does Cerebus. If you *did* have a brother and he said that he desired you and wanted to "become one flesh" with you, what would you do?

Konigsberg
I'd kill him.

Cerebus
Sure. That's what *anyone* would do. And that's what Cain did. *"And the Yoohwhoo said vnto Cain, where Hebel thy brother? And hee said, I know not. Am I my brother's keeper?"* See, what Cain is saying is, my brother turned out to be some kind of sick animal. What am I supposed to do? Be his keeper?

And he said, What hast thou done? The voyce of thy brothers bloods cryeth vnto me, from the ground. And now thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth." Note the gender: "her mouth." "...to receaue thy brother's blood from thy hand." Yoohwhoo's dirty little secret that she got from the good-and-evil fruit: blood-drinking. That was the real reason that she had respect unto Hebel's offerings. It wasn't the sheep carcass or the fat. It was the fact that Hebel was violating the agreement Yoohwhoo had with God *and* that he was spilling huge amounts of blood in the process that Yoowhoo could drink. *"When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yeeld vnto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth."* In the earth. Cain's soul will be persecuted by Yoohwhoo *inside* of her. Of course, Yoohwhoo has forgotten, momentarily, that this is God she is talking to. Hebel represented Yoohwhoo and Cain represents God, the younger and the elder, the day and the evening. Or in Yoohwhoo's opinion—the elder and the younger, the evening and the day. So, God's representative has basically just killed Yoohwhoo's representative—which is only fair, since Yoohwhoo is in the process of killing all the men by keeping them away from the tree of life—and Yoohwhoo has basically just cursed God. *"And Cain said vnto the Yoohwhoo, My iniquitie greater than it may be forgiuen. Behold, thou hast driuen me out this day from the face of the earth, and from thy face..."* the earth's face or Yoohwhoo's face, God, speaking through Cain, knows that there's no difference between them. "...*shall I be hid, and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth, and it shall come to passe, everyone that findeth me shall slay me."* Just out of curiosity, have your people had, um, certain problems with how they've treated God's prophets and messengers over the years?

Konigsberg
I refuse to answer on the grounds that I'm not feeling very well all of a sudden.

Cerebus
That's what Cerebus figured. Anyway, it's

another "oops" for Yoohwhoo, considering that she's been trying to get God to act like a husband and "become one flesh" with her. So Yoohwhoo back pedals in a hurry—using "therefore" instead of "for" this time—but *again* using it in a way that doesn't make any sense, except to a woman. But trying to make it *sound* as if it's a logical answer to what God, through Cain, has just said. *"And the Yoohwhoo said vnto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain vengeance shalbe taken on him seven fold. And the Yoohwhoo set a marke vpon Cain."* more of Yoohwhoo's knowledge-of-good-and-evil—like the Cherubim and the flaming sword—black magic basically. *"...lest any finding him should kill him. And Cain went out from the presence of the Yoohwhoo, and dwelt in the land of Nod on the East of Eden. And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bare Enoch."* See, this is why Cerebus was wondering *where* you got the idea that Adam and Hawwa were the *first* man and woman. If they were, where did *Cain's* wife come from? Nay. As Cerebus understands it, Yoohwhoo grew this amazing garden, see, so God *made* a man *specially* from the dust of the ground—that is, God made a man specially for Yoohwhoo's amazing garden. And God made the man specially the *same way* God made the *first* man—way, way, *way* before the events of the First Book of Moshe. Basically, doing [thunks for a while] what [sighs] what you *always* have to do when you're trying to explain something to a woman that she really doesn't *want* to understand. Start over at the beginning. Start over at the beginning. Start over at the beginning. Start over at the beginning. *Start over at the beginning. START OVER AT THE BEGINNING* [noticeS Konigsberg and I looking at him a little funny] [clears throat] In this case, as happens a lot when you're dealing with a woman, starting over at the beginning doesn't do any good because she has her own stupid ideas—in this case believing that she's a god and that she's actually the cause of everything that God is trying to show her. At this point, Cerebus couldn't help but wonder *how many* specially-made men God has formed of the dust of the ground, how many "In the Beginnings" there have been with God *trying* to make Yoohwhoo understand. Cerebus' best guess is: A Lot. So, as Cerebus sees it, "the man," Adam, is so far from being the "first man" that it isn't even *funny*. As Cerebus sees it, outside of Yoohwhoo's garden, there were already lots and lots of men *and* women, who got made [clears throat] the way [clears throat again], you know, the—uh—the way *Cain and Hebel* got made. See. From the *last* time God had created a man and his

yoohwhoo and told them to "Be fruitful and multiply." So Cain's wife would have just been a ..uh.. [thinks] ..a ..uh.. [looks at Konigsberg]

Konigsberg
A uh fruitful result?

Cerebus
Aye. Good way of putting it. Just another "fruitful result" who lived outside of Yoohwhoo's garden. *". . . and he builded a City, and called the name of the City after the name of his son Enoch."* See, this is how Cain gets around Yoohwhoo's curse that the ground *"shall not henceforth yeeld vnto thee her strength."* He comes up with the *concept* of a *city*, so that he can get *other guys* to do all the farming, see, and then these *other guys* bring their produce *into* Cain's city. Which was pretty darned clever of Cain, if you ask Cerebus, to come up with the *concept* of a city so he and his wife and kids don't starve to death because of Yoohwhoo's curse. [reads the text] Okay. So, then Cain --who probably had a little too much time on his hands, what with all these *other guys* doing his farming for him-- understandably makes a pretty big deal about passing on his resentment of his unfair punishment and his *father's* unfair punishment, father to son, father to son, down through the promised "seven-fold" generations. As far as *Cain* is concerned, *he's* the one who's entitled to be *avenged*. Who *wouldn't* have murdered his younger brother if the younger brother acted that way? And Cain's son, his grandson, his great-grandson *and* his great-*great* grandson are all in complete agreement. Enoch, Irad, Mehuael, Methusael, Lamech. In fact, Lamech is so *eager* to say what he has to say on Cain and God's *behalf*, that he takes *two* wives, just so he can get to the *seventh* generation on a technicality. And he says to his two wives (really venting his spleen) he says, *"Heare my voyce, yee wives of Lamech, hearken vnto my speech: for I would slay a man in my wound and a yong man in my hurt. If Cain shall bee avenged seuen fold, truely Lamech seuenty and seuen folde."* Basically, Lamech is saying what we just said and what his father and his grand-father and his great grandfather and his great *great* grandfather --probably said. If *my* younger brother said to *me* what Hebel said to Cain, I would kill him, too. And notice that Lamech has three sons and one daughter, which is an indication of how upside down everything is. *Yoohwhoo* is the three-headed He She and It being. God is the singular He. The three sons are al.

pretty clever, though coming up with concepts that will help get them through this mess for the "seventy and seven generations" it's going to take, as far as they can tell, for justice to be done. Like Cain coming up with the concept of a city. One invents metal-working, one invents basic musical instruments, and one comes up with the idea of becoming a shepherd-nomad for those guys who don't want to live in a city. All things that will help make life more livable for them for however many thousands of years it's going to take for Yoohwhoo to lift her curse on herself. [thinks] [refers to the text] Meanwhile, back at the garden—hundreds of years *before* the Lamech part of the story—Hawwa, it seems, has been coming out to visit Adam on the other side of the Cherubim and the flaming sword. *"And Adam knew his wife againe, and she bare a sonne, & called his name Sheth. For God hath appointed mee another seed in stead of Hebel whom Cain slew."* So, at least Hawwa now knows who has the seed and who doesn't and who is actually in charge. God. *"And to Sheth, to him also there was borne a sonne, and he called his name Enosh ..."* And then comes the bad news: *"...then began men to call vpon the Name of the Yoohwhoo."* So, there you go. That's where the problem started, worshipping Yoohwhoo instead of God. The next chapter, chapter five is really just a genealogy of all of Adam's descendants, basically showing that—cut off by Yoohwhoo's black magic from the fruit of the tree of life, which God had intended them to have so they could live forever—the men all live shorter and shorter lives. Nine hundred and thirty years, nine hundred and twelve years, nine hundred and five years—upward spurts, here and there, but overall, shorter and shorter lives. At *any time* during those nine centuries, Yoohwhoo *could* have relented and let Adam and his descendants *back* into the garden to eat from the tree of life. [thinks] But, no. That's just not Yoohwhoo. So, *eventually* Adam dies. *Hawwa and her daughters* are alive, eating the fruit of the tree of life, but Adam and his sons all die.

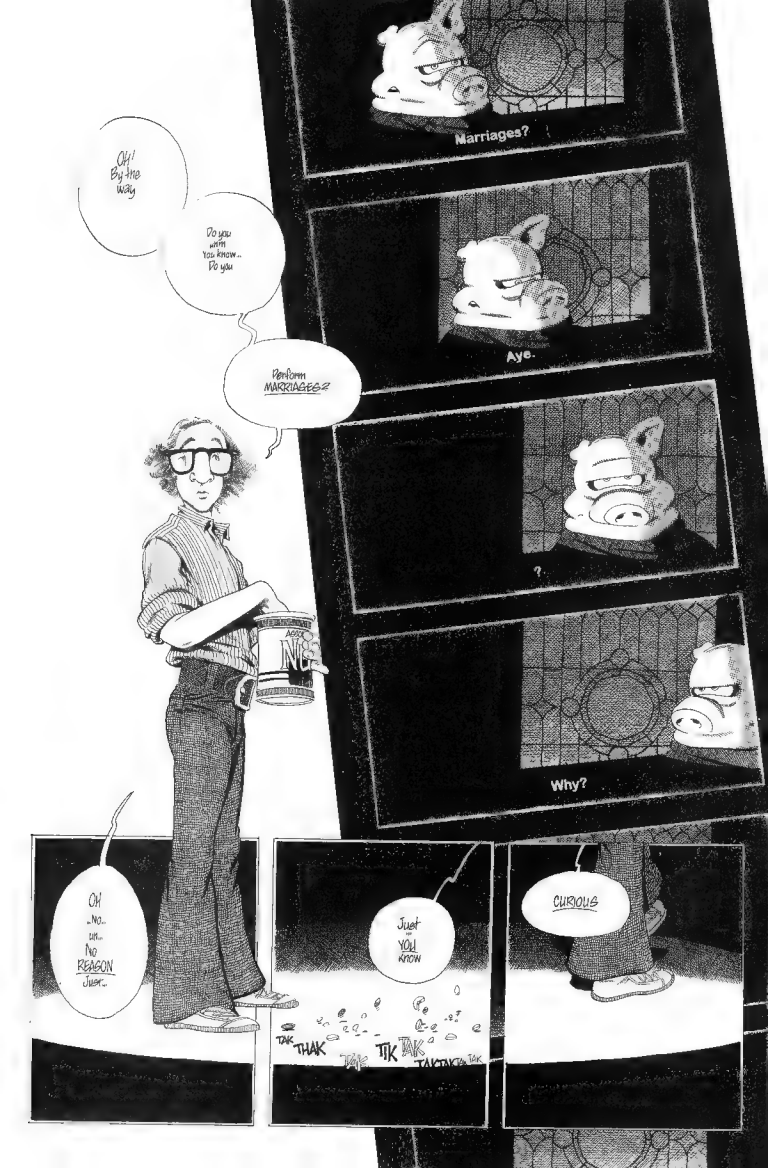
Konigsberg
That's so... so *sad*.

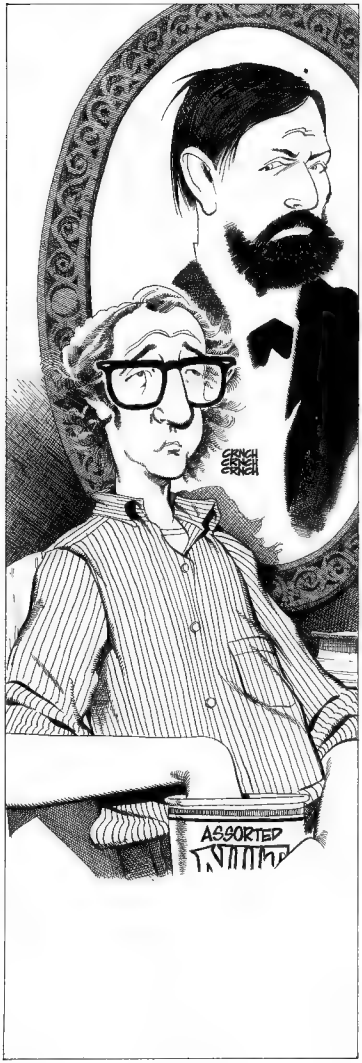
Cerebus
Sad? *That* part isn't sad. [thinks] Well, okay, aye, it is. But the really, really, really *really* sad part is that—even though all of the men die because they've been cut off from the tree of life by Yoohwhoo and even though they *know* that they're all going to die because they've been cut off from the tree of life, they STILL *worship* Yoohwhoo. They STILL "call upon the name of the Yoohwhoo." They STILL murder and mutilate sheep to try to *please* Yoohwhoo. Except one guy. Way down here in verse 22 to 24: *"And Enoch walked with God, after he begate Methuselah, three hundred years, and begate sonnes and daughters. And all the dayes of Enoch were three hundred and sixtie and fiue yeeres. And Enoch walked with God: and he was not, for God tooke him."* The only guy who *walked with* God instead of *mutilating and burning defenceless animals to try to please* Yoohwhoo. It doesn't say what happens to you after you die if you've spent your life mutilating and burning defenceless animals—cattle which are off-limits, taboo—to try to please Yoohwhoo but Cerebus is willing to bet you're a lot better off "walking with God" so that when you die God takes you. [thinks for a few minutes] How *many* of these *off-limits cattle* do you suppose your people mutilated and burned trying to please the living thing, the big light and the big fire in the middle of the earth?

Konigsberg
Once again, I decline to answer on the basis of feeling even more nauseous than I did a few minutes ago. [thinks] Millions, probably.

Cerebus
There's the sad part. Someday, Yoohwhoo is going to demand that that "debt" be paid. And—millions, you said? Millions of your people are going to... um. [long pause] [clears throat] [another long pause] Anyway, another Lamech comes along, right around the time that Adam becomes the *first* man to die from being cut off from the tree of life. And Lamech has a son, Noah. And Lamech says, *"This shall comfort us, concerning our woorke and toyle of our hands, because of the ground which the Yoohwhoo hath cursed."* See, not only has Yoohwhoo cut them off from the tree of life, she's also making it as difficult as possible for *any* of Adam and his descendants to grow any food. And Lamech ends up living seven hundred and seventy-seven years. Which, to Cerebus, looks like another technicality—like the other Lamech marrying two wives to get to the seventh generation one generation early. It isn't the seventy and seven fold generations the *other* Lamech promised. [thinks] But it *is* a lot of sevens.

CRNCH CRNCH CRNCH CRUNCH
GULP
And...?
...AND THAT'S THE END OF CHAPTER FIVE!
TUMP
THE NEXT PART
THE NEXT PART IS THE FLOOD
IT'S THE PART RIGHT AFTER THE FLOOD THAT'S GIVING CEREBUS TROUBLE
CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH CRUNCH
YOU KNOW WHERE TO FIND ME


Marriages?
Aye.
?
Why?
Perform MARRIAGES?
Oh! By the way
Do you even know... Do you
Oh ...no... um... No REASON Just...
Just... YOU know
CURIOUS
TAK
THAK
TJK
TAK
TAK



4th of Springmonth 71 – Why can't I get Louie Lasso Louie Lasso off of my mind? Is it that...haunting, overbine? That...adenoidal whine? Or am I drawn merely by her genteel aristocratic history? (The first grandchild of the legendary Patriarch of the Black Satchmo White Vinegar Trust – Armstrong "Black Satchmo" Louie – and the EQUALLY legendary Patriarch of the Blind Lemon Oil Consortium – "Blind Lemon" Lasso – she had been named "Louie Lasso" in honour of BOTH of them. Then, when she was nine, her mother – the former Laguna "Bubbles" Dumbrowski – divorced her first husband – Armstrong "Little Satchmo" Louie, Jr. – and married "Blind Lemon" Lasso SENIOR, becoming his third wife. It was said that, upon the deaths of Armstrong and "Blind Lemon", she would control, single-handedly, the Salad Dressing Destinies of five continents! Small wonder that she had insisted on a pre-nuptial agreement specifying that she would retain her former AND present married names on a STRICTLY HYPHENATED basis, so that – when the time came – there would be no doubt as to which way the edible vegetable liquid by-products would be flowing.) The more I think about it, the more convinced I am that this represents my best opportunity to marry into the ruthless and dangerously inbred dynastic family of my childhood dreams.

8th of Springmonth 71 – Combing (and occasionally Brushing) the works of the Master I find him strangely mute on the subject of marriage. So much so, that I have been reduced to re-reading a passage on "love-transference" and substituting for it the word marriage: "Marriage is lacking in regard for reality to a high degree, is less sensible, less concerned about consequences, more blind in its estimation of the person loved, than we are willing to admit of normal love...We should not forget, however, that it is precisely these departures from the norm that make up the essential element in the condition of being in love."

In this I sense the Master's infinite wisdom crying out to me, and saying, "What are you? A complete schlemiel? The woman controls PERSONALLY, between eight and ten MILLION

cubic meters of the finest, all-natural, vegetable-based lubricant known to man! You could literally BATHE in the stuff three times a DAY and it wouldn't even show up on the month-end inventory reconciliation! Instead? You make a tube of petroleum jelly last THREE WEEKS so the cashier at the clothing, hut doesn't LOOK at you funny! Pursue your BLISS! SEIZE the carp! Hitch your wagon to a STAR! TRANSFORM all that you survey into the slippery, slithery, near-frictionless surface of your DREAMS!"

4th of Springmonth 71 — Re-reading my notes from yesterday, I suspect that I have been reading INTO the text, rather than OUT of the text. BAD Samaritan! In all of Dr Fraud's collected writings I can find not a single instance of him using the phrase "seize the carp." At a loss for an explanation for misconstruing the Master's writings, I mope around all day reading and RE-reading all of the relevant passages regarding Transference, Displacement and Projection (and even its less common Anal Variation: REAR Projection). Suddenly, it HITS me like a bolt from the blue: I'm in LOVE with Louis Lasso Louis-Lasso and I want to MARRY her!

10th of Springmonth 71 — I've barely slept a wink all night. So — THIS is what being in love is like! LIKE drinking too many cappuccino's in a row. LIKE having your Brain surgically removed and replaced with a tiny pile of warm, pink bunny slippers! LIKE a violin concerto with a chewy, chocolate center! LIKE so MANY metaphors too sickening for any NORMAL person to CONTEMPLATE without vomiting! I long to FLY to Louis Lasso Louis-Lasso to speak all these warm, pink bunny slipper words ALOUD! (Go fer' OODGEE-POODGEE poopeedoopeepoo although I'd be the FIRST to admit that my bunny slipper dialect may be a little rusty) and I SHALL! Just as soon as I come up with a reasonable explanation for how the lace handkerchief she left here the other night got all stiff and "crunchy."

essay

Islam, My Islam

The success of the Israeli Defence Forces' Operation Defensive Shield in May aided substantially in shredding the tissue of lies which is the Palestinian Authority. The operation, which netted about 70% of the leading terrorist operatives and neutralized 80% of the bomb-making labs in the targeted West Bank Cities (about 4,500 Palestinians were detained in the operation. Of these 1,450 were formally arrested and charged after admitting involvement in terrorist activities. The IDF also seized 2,000 Kalashnikov rifles, 800 pistols, 388 sniper rifles, 93 machine guns, 9 rocket launchers, six mortars, 40 ammunition crates and 430 explosive charges). More significant (by far) was the seizure of documents linking Yasser Arafat directly to terrorist activities. "We've managed to translate and explain around a dozen documents, different documents of different types, which have shown the connection of the Palestinian Authority to terrorism," said Colonel Miri Eisin, a senior Israeli intelligence officer.

Although it is unwise to underestimate the ability of the secular left-liberal quasi-socialists to accommodate these new facts while simultaneously professing an undying faith in Yasser Arafat as the only possible "partner for peace" in the Middle East (this is, after all, the political faction that still housed a sizeable constituency of Stalin apologists as late as the 1960s) it does appear that the PA chairman's days as a pivotal figure on the world stage are drawing to a close. Certainly his credibility as a *Muslim* suffered a (perhaps mortal?) blow when he turned over to British and U.S. control the six terrorists he had been sheltering at his Ramallah headquarters in a deal to lift the Israeli siege on his compound. This recalled the decision which faced Abu Talib, Muhammad's uncle, when the Koreish were pressuring him to surrender the Prophet to them. As I mentioned in discussing that situation earlier in this series of essays (relative to the U.S. promise of a reward of US $25 million for the surrender of Osama bin Laden), surrendering a Muslim to the infidels is a real "non-starter" for both Arabs and Muslims. Upon his release, Arafat was forced to cancel a tour of the Jenin refugee camp because of concerns for his safety. At this point, despite his "nine lives," I think it's safe to say that Arafat has dropped off the radar screen as a potential Heir to the Mantle of the Prophet. However, in my view, he still merits close scrutiny and I still recommend the precautionary measure of taking him out in the woods and putting a bullet in his head. I think the fears that the summary execution of Yasser Arafat would lead to his being seen as a martyr to the Palestinian cause are entirely unfounded. I view it as an extension of the sensible Israeli policy of "early retirement" for the homicidal elements within the PA, Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, the al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade (if they are going to describe themselves as Martyrs, then I think they should be assisted in fulfilling that description). As Neill Lochery, director of the Centre for Israeli Studies at University College in London, put it in his article of 23 January:

> *The vast majority of the Palestinian population is secular in nature, and is turned off by the prospect of an Islamic Fundamentalist Palestinian State—the ideological cornerstone of Hamas and Islamic Jihad's program. Support for Hamas has, in the main, been based on the growing dependency of segments of Palestinian society on the hospitals and schools run by it, which are sponsored by foreign donors. The hospitals often provide much better conditions than their counterparts run by the Palestinian Authority, which are funded by taxation. Money is, however, drying up, particularly in the post-Sept. 11 climate. With the United States, at last, launching serious investigations into international funding of radical Islamic groups, many wealthy Saudis are withdrawing contributions for fear of being exposed.*

I think the Western Democracies should try not to lose sight of the fact that the Islamic extremists—the Wahabites and their offshoots—are a minority within a minority. As Mr. Lochery goes on to say, "In reality, these groups enjoy core support of only around 10% of the population, the rest is merely an endorsement of their hawkish stand against Israel." 10% of the population supports the extremist groups which, I would guess, represents 10% of that 10% (those who support terrorism and suicide bombings as an appropriate method for achieving a political aim). In turn 10% of *that* 10% consists of those who actu-

ally own Kalashnakov rifles, machine guns, mortars and have used them or intend to use them against Israeli soldiers or citizens or who are actually engaged in the making of suicide bombs in the various West Bank underground factories and—who actually believe the ridiculous fatwas of many prominent Wahabite Muslim clerics declaring Israel to be a "a head-to-toe 'military society' in which even the babies are soldiers," thus "validating" the indiscriminate murder of women and children as "legitimate" targets of *jihad*. And then, of course, there is the 10% of *that* 10% who actually blow themselves up. My thesis is that, once you get down to the base level of people who seriously believe that babies are soldiers and that blowing yourself up next to women and children is a legitimate form of warfare, you are no longer dealing with human beings, you are dealing with homicidal nutcases. *Armed* homicidal nutcases. Armed homicidal nutcases who constitute a minority within a minority within a minority. That is to say, a "handful" of armed homicidal nutcases. The only sensible reaction to a "handful" of armed homicidal nutcases is the one Israeli forces have been using: targeted killings. "Early retirement," coupled with surgical incursions into the homicidal nutcase breeding grounds, incarceration and interrogation to separate the 1,450 terrorist participants from the 4,500 (relatively) harmless civilians. Contrary to conventional wisdom, I don't believe that armed homicidal nutcases are able to breed that fast. When you are dealing with 10% of 10% of 10% of 10%, it's basically a "grooming" operation: the way that apes comb through each other's fur to get the lice and ticks out. Do they get all of the lice and ticks out? No. Do the lice and ticks come back? Certainly. Then what's the point? The point is to keep the population of lice and ticks in your fur to a minimum. It's time-consuming, it is a non-stop process, it is (I'm sure) no "day at the beach" for the lice and the ticks, but it is certainly worth doing and I would venture to say that the vast majority of anthropoids—even though they exist below the threshold of genuine sentience—agree with me. "99% of Apes Surveyed Agree: Constant Grooming Well Worth Effort, Time Involved." In fact, I would argue that Arab sentience (far, far exceeding that of the apes) makes what the Israelis are doing even more worthwhile. As incoherent and insensible as the Wahabite Muslim extremists tend to be (as they have to be, since they are defending an indefensible viewpoint), still they are able to recognize that—if the IDF is able to penetrate the refugee camps at will and separate the "wheat from the chaff" of those they arrest (releasing the "wheat" and imprisoning the "chaff")—as *sentient beings* it is going to become apparent to the "Palestinians" after a few of these incursions that it is high time to get out of the "lice and tick" business (as it were). The net effect of "grooming" is to bring forth less incoherent and less insensible representatives of the opposing viewpoint, to marginalise the incoherent and insensible Wahabite extremists. As is only appropriate since they are, inescapably, a minority of a minority of a minority of a minority. Constant "grooming," coupled with a willingness to negotiate should (all things being equal) eventually produce a coherent and sensible viewpoint on the Muslim/Arab/Palestinian/Transjordanian/West Bank and Gaza side of the debate. And then negotiations can resume—or, rather, begin.

I say "begin" because I don't think what we have had up 'til now represents anything close to a sensible negotiation. On the contrary, I think most of the posturing that we have seen from the PA has been a relentless playing of (what I call) the "Jesus card". The PA and Yasser Arafat portray themselves as martyrs (*istishad*). The reason for this, I believe, is that they know that the Israelis—owing to their experience with Jesus—are loathe to allow anyone to occupy the *rôle* of victim—or, rather, Victim. Remember that the complete destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 A.D. took place within the lifetime of that same generation of Jews who had witnessed the Crucifixion. The synchronistic occurrence of those two events is very much at the core of the Jewish experience, the mass Jewish consciousness (if you will). They lost their homeland and their city for two thousand years. Having gotten their homeland back for all of fifty years and their city for thirty-five years, there is a definite, justifiable and profound Jewish wariness about losing both again—particularly for what the Jews would regard as the same reason: martyrdom, or, rather, Martyrdom. I believe that this is the reason that every Israeli government since 1948 has been walking on eggshells when it comes to the use of force. Even on those occasions when the surrounding Arab nations have attacked and then been forced into an inglorious retreat, the Israeli military has always stopped well short—*well short*—of exhausting its own battlefield momentum. Had they chosen, they could've cut through their opponents like a hot knife through butter. But each time, they have exhibited remarkable, nearly superhuman, restraint: seizing only the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights. That's it! Even though, on each occasion, in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, they went through their opponents like a hot knife through butter. I believe The PA—seeing the "trump card" writing on the wall with the Israeli adoption of surgical incursions into the refugee camp/cities of the West Bank as their new foreign policy—have pulled out all the stops in their attempts

to play the "Jesus Card." Case in point:

An article by Stewart Bell, dated May 1st (a couple of days before Arafat turned over the six terrorists to British and U.S. control) mentions that Arafat, some humanitarian groups and a member of the Knesset (the Israeli parliament) were complaining that the Israeli army was "starving the 72-year-old Palestinian leader":

> *Angered by suggestions it had tried to starve Yasser Arafat out of his presidential compound, the Israeli military has released a lengthy list of the groceries it shipped to the Palestinian leader during his month under siege. The figures, presented to the foreign affairs and defence committees of the Knesset, show Mr. Arafat and his entourage consumed 13,200 pieces of pita bread, 420 cans of hummus, 423 cans of tuna, 720 bottles of Coke, 30 cans of coffee, 155 boxes of tea, 360 kilograms of sugar, 505 cans of sardines, 458 packages of cheese, 60 cartons of eggs.*
>
> *In addition, 120 cartons of cigarettes and 270 packages of toilet paper were brought in, plus hundreds of kilograms of rice and fruits and vegetables, including 24 watermelons, 40 kilograms of grapes and 65 kilograms of lemons.*
>
> *One box of Corn Flakes was also sent to Mr. Arafat.*

That "one box of Corn Flakes" cracks me up. So much for the "Jesus Card" on this one.

If you keep track of Yasser Arafat's various pronouncements, there is a definite attempt at "linkage" between Christianity and Islam, the use of the "Jesus Card". The Jews murdered Jesus! The Jews are murdering Palestinians! Let us join forces and drive the Jews into the Mediterranean! This, of course, takes place against a backdrop of the degraded estate to which Christianity has sunk, particularly in the last fifty years, a state of degradation of which Muslims, Arabs and "Palestinians" are either blindly ignorant or which they intentionally choose to ignore in the interests of forging the necessary temporary alliance. North Americans and Europeans, if they give Jesus or God even a passing thought in the course of the average day, rate both, in my view, at a level of interest somewhere below that of Levi jeans or the latest Star Wars epic which, themselves, are rated well below the level of importance of the Superbowl, the World Cup, if Madonna is pregnant or not and what Jennifer Lopez is going to wear to the Academy Awards. The reaction of Raymond J. de Souza, Rome correspondent for the *National Catholic Register* to the recent occupation of the Church of the Nativity by "Palestinian" gangsters, to me, neatly encapsulates the problem in an article entitled "Christianity turns the other cheek: Where is the outrage when a church is desecrated?"

> *Christian pusillanimity reached absurd lows last Saturday night* [11 May] *when Italian mayors, gathered in Rome, took to the Colosseum to sing John Lennon's* Imagine. *Italy, which is very proud of itself for being selected as the likely site of the next international peace conference on the Middle East, wanted to show its commitment to peace. The Christian martyrs of the Colosseum would have wept to see it.*
>
> *The enemies of Christianity are justified in their laughter. The birthplace of Jesus Christ is overrun by terrorists, and in response, dozens of at least nominally Catholic politicians sing pop music's most nihilistic anthem—imagine there's no Heaven...no countries...no religion. Imagine no Christian resistance. It isn't hard to do.*
>
> *Never before in the centuries of wars and sackings that have drenched the Holy Land in blood has the basilica of the Nativity been occupied. And for good reason—potential occupiers knew that a ferocious response would certainly have followed. Today, the only penalty seems to be having to listen to John Lennon's puerile philosophy set to music.*

The problem, of course, is that there is no such thing as Christendom such as Yasser Arafat envisions. The worldwide entity that he seeks to unite behind his cause is in the process of being taken over and eviscerated by women, as surely as colleges and universities and the entertainment field have been taken over and gutted by the left-liberal, quasi-socialist feminine sensibility. The Anglican Church has already fallen, Anglicans having been given the conventional feminist choice of "capitulate or leave": accept women priests, homosexual priests and same-sex marriages or leave. Women are, by nature, pusillanimous creatures. United with their pusillanimous counterparts—women-with-penises—there is no conflict too large, no interest too vital that, in their view, it can't be preserved by closing their eyes, linking arms and imagining that there are no countries, no religion, no Heaven, no Hell, dropping piteously to

their knees and, with bottom lip a-tremble, singing along. This was, of course, the reality that the watershed moments of 11 September exposed most vividly. All of the left-liberal, quasi-socialist women and women-with-penises standing around with mouths agape and tears streaming down their cheeks. And those of us who believe—and who believed *prior* to 11 September—that there *is* such a thing as good and evil and that good *must* be eternally vigilant and *must* actively work to destroy evil wherever it exists were left looking at the "Kumbaya" brigade and going, Yes? And…? Do you want to add a couple of verses: "Imagine there's no World Trade Center"? "Imagine there's no Pentagon"? Of course, the "Kumbaya" brigade has been with us for some time: its ideological predecessors believed that Hitler could be negotiated with. Right up to September 1939 when the German tanks rolled into Poland. At which point, I'm sure my ideological predecessors looked at the appeasers going, Yes? And…? At these critical junctures in the histories of the great democracies, left-liberal, quasi-socialist women and women-with-penises all have the same astute plan of action which they immediately institute: that is, they continue to stand there with their mouths agape and tears streaming down their cheeks.

I'm trying hard not to pre-empt my own concluding remarks to this series and much of the substance of "Why Canada Slept". However, suffice to say, I believe that it was a serious miscalculation on Yasser Arafat's part to think that Christendom with its feminist rot and infestation was in any position to take any kind of concerted action for or against *anyone* or even to make any kind of declaration apart from "Yes, dear. Whatever you say, dear. I apologize, dear." Although the Catholic church *appears* to the women and women-with-penises to be holding out against their best efforts (this can, I think, be attributed to the fact that—as was the case with colleges and universities— feminism accepts only *total* capitulation. Not for too little is *Zero tolerance* a catchphrase of feminist origin: to women and women-with-penises there is only *one* way, *their* way and *their* way is absolute) the fact remains that its evisceration is far advanced. For all intents and purposes the Catholic church is now a secular feminist social engineering bastion, like the universities and colleges. All that is in doubt is the sequence in which the remaining dominos of its infrastructure will ultimately fall. Thus, its institutional reactions to even the most monumental of crises—and its hard to imagine a more monumental crisis in world Christendom than the takeover of the Church of the Nativity by gangsters—must needs be those of its constituent parts, women and women-with-penises: for now and evermore all the Catholic church will be equipped to do in a crisis is to stand there with its institutional mouth agape and institutional tears streaming down its cheeks.

This series is called "Islam, My Islam," but I think the issue of Israel holding the moral high ground in the Middle East is worth lingering over a bit. While I give equal weight to Judaism and Islam, when it comes to Israel and the Arab dictatorships, I favour the former over the latter, hands down. It is, to me, only common sense. Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East and I would have to consider Israel (very much against overwhelming odds, I might add) to be a vanguard democracy. Like the United States, Israel pushes the boundaries of what is and what is not allowed within its borders, striving always to err on the side of greater freedom for all its citizens. Ed Morgan, a law professor at the University of Toronto, has written a couple of pieces on this very subject after the Israeli incursion into the Jenin refugee camp about a petition filed with the Supreme Court of Israel to halt the removal of bodies and how the Court filed a temporary injunction supporting the petition which it then overturned a couple of days later after a partial agreement had been reached between the petitioners and the Israeli government:

> *The petition in question challenged the army's plans to bury Palestinian gunmen separately from civilians killed in the fighting. It was filed by Adalah, the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, along with two Arab Israeli Knesset members, Mohammad Barakeh and Ahmed Tibi. The existence and strength of these Arab legal and political figures in the Israeli system is itself worthy of note given the negative, apartheid-like caricature of Israel so prevalent in international human rights circles. The ability of these activists to bring a challenge to military operations in the midst of a war is truly remarkable.*
>
> *What is perhaps the most interesting aspect of all, however, is that this was not a futile effort by activists to dramatize their point; in fact, they won a major part of their case. Chief Justice Aaron Barak issued a court order denying the armed forces access to the town which they had just fought bitterly last week to gain.*
>
> *The petitioners had claimed that the plans for cleaning up Jenin included house demolitions and interment of dead gunmen in a mass grave that would violate international law. Israel's most liberal jurist...ordered the military to halt pending a full hearing.*

Two days later, after the army saw the judicial writing on the wall and agreed to bury the gunmen in accordance with Palestinian wishes, the court lifted the injunction. The panel of three judges included the religious appointee to Israel's Supreme Court, Justice Yitzhak Englard, who has endorsed a humanitarian rather than doctrinaire approach to issues of religion and the law. In a compromise ruling, the panel refused to interfere with the security assessment that the demolitions were necessary, but it did so only after it satisfied itself that the human rights issues of mass burial was resolved to the petitioners' satisfaction.

During the height of the Vietnam war, the U.S. courts came to a similar position toward the conduct of military operations, refusing to interfere with the strategic decisions of the armed forces in the war effort, but enjoining and punishing specific cases of human rights abuses.

Israel's struggle to protect legal rights and maintain a democracy under intense pressure is frequently ignored by its detractors, including those in the human rights movement itself. The most graphic example of this came last September in Durban [the U.N. Conference on Racism] *when Azmi Bishara of the Knesset's Balad party, led a group of marchers carrying placards declaring Israel to be an apartheid state. As an elected Arab member of the Knesset, however, Bishara is living proof of the antithesis of his followers' claim.*

And this, on May 10, after Mr. Morgan had returned from a Canadian lawyers' mission to Israel and the West Bank:

In recent years, and with increased intensity in recent weeks, the Israeli Supreme Court has gone where virtually no court has gone before. A collection of Jewish and Arab human rights organizations—the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, its Palestinian equivalent Adalah Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights and the broadly respected B'tselem human rights organization—have succeeded in engaging the Supreme Court in issues that most judicial bodies would shy away from. Starting in the 1980s, it has endorsed rights for gay spouses, gender equality in a large number of social contexts, anti-discrimination in housing for Arab Israelis, the rights of national security detainees to procedural safeguards and due process, the right of prisoners not to be subjected to physical abuse or torture, the right of long term residents not to be deported and an assortment of rights for religious minorities and non-Orthodox Jews.

One noteworthy case resulted in an agreement between the Israel Defense Forces and Adalah, allowing representatives of the International Red Cross to accompany army teams in evacuating Palestinian wounded and killed to local hospitals. The compromise struck a balance between, on one hand, the security concerns resulting from several well documented cases of terrorists hiding in ambulances and, on the other hand, the self-evident need to provide medical relief during the heat of battle.

Indeed, the Israeli judicial activism has an interestingly paradoxical quality: it provides an accessible and objective forum for rights enforcement against the government and provides the government with its best line of defence against the subjective and hostile interventions from abroad.

Obviously, I disagree with "rights for gay spouses" and I would have to see an itemized list of "social contexts" for "gender equality" (I am very much in favour of women who are convicted of crimes serving the same sentences that men convicted of those crimes serve, as an example: something which is not apt to happen anytime soon) before saying "yay" or "nay". Again, trying not to pre-empt I believe that the "gay spouses" and "gender equality" nonsense will infect all of the non-Muslim world—at least in a legalistic sense—before non-Muslim society gets around to addressing the actual implications. Leaping before you look has always been the feminist way.

We were discussing the use of the "Jesus Card" by Yasser Arafat and the PA. Regarding the Israeli military operation in Jenin, Shimon Peres (uncharacteristically for Israel's super-dove) heaped scorn on the Palestinian claims of a massacre.

The story began with the so-called fact that 3,000 Palestinian civilians lost their lives. But now Palestinians are saying it is down to several hundred. To the best of our knowledge, seven civilian persons lost their lives in Jenin.

In his own examination of this ridiculous inflation of casualty figures, Charles Krauthammer ("All this fuss for a phantom massacre") cited the suicide bombings of the previous month in Jerusalem, Yagor, Haifa, Eilon Moreh and Netanya (total of 61 casualities, all civilians) and found himself, once more, driven to the use of italics: "These are massacres—actual, recent massacres. Massacres for which the evidence is hard. Massacres for which the perpetrators *claimed credit.* Where was the Security Council? Where was the Kofi Annan commission? Where was the world?"

Yes, exactly. *Claimed. Credit.* Not "accepted blame." *Claimed. Credit.* Addressing all of the secular left-liberal, quasi-socialists in the crowd: Just for a change, just this once, how about *not treating* those questions as rhetorical? *Where* was the Security Council? *Where* was the Kofi Annan commission? *Where* was the world? Still insist on seeing the two sides as co-equivalent?

Contrast the documented instances of Israel's Supreme Court seeking to protect human rights in that country with this eyewitness account filed from Hebron by Steward Bell under the headline, "'Informants' Meet Death on Peace St." (*National Post*, April 24):

> *Down the road, the bloodied bodies of three Palestinians, accused of helping Israel were displayed for all to see in front of the Al-Ansaar Mosque—two of them strung by their feet from metal electrical towers and a third left lying on his back on Peace Street.*
>
> *Hundreds of people rushed to the centre of this biblical town on horseback, in cars and by foot to see the latest victims and to spit on the bodies. Children, women and men gathered around the hanging corpses, smiling and laughing.*
>
> *Yesterday's lynchings were said to be retribution for the death hours earlier of Marvan Zalum, the 43-year-old leader of the Tanzim militia in Hebron.*
>
> *By morning, local Tanzim members had rounded up three men they accused of helping the Israelis pinpoint Mr. Zalum's location. They were brought out on to Peace Street in front of the mosque minaret, given a hasty "trial" and pronounced guilty.*
>
> *The men were lined up in front of Mr. Zalum's car and shot in the head. Their bodies were then mutilated by a crowd that mobbed the downtown street to seek revenge for the death of Mr.Zalum.*
>
> *Colonel Miri Eisin, a senior intelligence officer in the Israel Defence Forces, said she did not know whether the men were informants, but noted that while the Palestinian Authority has been unable to arrest many militants on a list sought by Israel, those deemed collaborators are quickly caught and punished.*

The more I've considered the situation, the more I have come to believe that the problem with secular left-liberal, quasi-socialist "thinking" in the Western Democracies is that it takes democracy for granted. In fact, it takes democracy for granted to such an extent that it sees the underpinnings of democracy, the protection of human rights, the rule of law, as merely one option among (many? several?): "democracy" and "not democracy" as an honest difference of opinion. Some people want to petition a civilized Supreme Court with a grievance through prescribed channels and use the basis of centuries of jurisprudence and legal precedence to arrive at a logical conclusion. And some people want to drag people out in the street, have a show trial on the spot and shoot them in the head. Seeing the latter as a less suitable way to conduct a society, frowning on that, let alone trying to eliminate it, is (seemingly) viewed by the secular left-liberal, quasi-socialists as culturally insensitive. Or something.

I do believe in summary execution for those engaged in targeting civilian populations. It is for that reason that, while I believe firmly in the rule of law, that belief does not extend to those who, themselves, order the execution of non-military personnel. Military personnel, that's a different matter. Take this example from earlier this year:

> *The gunman who attacked yesterday, armed with a bolt-action rifle of Second World War-vintage, was hidden in trees overlooking the checkpoint near Ofra, home to 2,500 Jewish settlers. Using only 25 cartridges, he shot dead three soliders, one by one. When a paramedic and an officer arrived, he shot them too, as well as two settlers waiting in their cars. A vehicle arrived with the settlement's head of security, and the gunman shot dead two more soldiers and mortally wounded a third. A helicopter tried to locate him, but he fled, abandoning his weapon.*

In terms of "armed resistance," which is a right the Palestinian Authority has been claiming for itself, well, yes, sure. Shooting the soldiers seems legitimate to me if you sincerely believe that they are occu-

pying your land illegally. But a paramedic? Or the two settlers waiting in their cars? No, that's simply beyond the pale. Let's say that the IDF actually caught the guy. Instead of dropping his rifle, he ran with it, they see him run with it and they pursue him. If he hadn't shot the paramedic or the settlers, I would say the IDF was obligated to try and capture him, wounding him if that's what it takes to bring him down, but making a sincere effort to bring him in alive. Because he wasn't wearing a uniform, he wouldn't qualify for Geneva Convention protections, but civilized behaviour would dictate, to me, imprisonment. However, having shot the paramedic and the two settlers to death, to me, the guy forfeited his right to keep breathing. It would be perfectly legitimate, to me, having brought him down to put a bullet in his brain. Anyone who is pretending to be part of an "armed resistance" and shoots a paramedic is basically a mad dog and should be treated as such. This is why I recommend taking Arafat out in the woods and shooting him. He isn't a soldier or a freedom fighter, to me, he is a mad dog. He targeted civilians: most particularly the Israeli athletes at the Munich Olympics and the diplomats in Sudan. He has forfeited his right to keep breathing. Likewise with those who work in the bomb factories in the West Bank, those who plan the suicide bombings and those who assist the suicide bombers. If they were blowing up Israeli tanks or barracks or military installations, I would say, fine, good luck to you. But the fact that they are blowing up civilians, the fact that their *sole intention* is to blow up civilians means that everyone involved has forfeited their right to keep breathing. Likewise with the World Trade Center. The World Trade Center was not a valid military target. The twin towers were a civilian target. By targeting the twin towers, you have forfeited your right to keep breathing. Fact of life: As an al-Qaeda or Taliban member who has fallen into the hands of the American authorities, you are going to live out the rest of your days in a cage on Guantanamo Bay. To me, you should count this as an undeserved blessing, having forfeited your right to keep breathing. The attack on the Pentagon? Just considering the Pentagon itself, I would have to say that that was legit. That was a military target. THE military target if it comes to that. A lot of civilians work at the Pentagon but I think that comes under the heading of "at your own risk". If you are a civilian and you work in a facility that is primarily staffed by military personnel, your death as the result of an attack would have to qualify as "collateral damage". Of course, the fact that the attack took place with an airliner full of civilians takes it *completely* over to the other side of the equation. Any individual or organization that had even a tangential role in high-jacking the airliner and crashing it so that *all the civilians on board* were killed, in my view, has forfeited the right to keep breathing.

It is also worth noting, I think, that in the only instance that I am aware of in the course of the Intifada which has been going on since September of 2000, the only instance where Israeli civilians have targeted Palestinian civilians—a nutbar group calling itself "Revenge for the Infants" planted several bombs in an Arab elementary school injuring a teacher and three students—the Jerusalem police set up a special investigation team along with the domestic security service, Shin Bet. The inquiry would be conducted "with the same diligence as if it was an anti-Israeli attack," according to Mickey Levy, the Jerusalem police chief. Just a few weeks ago members of the outlawed Jewish Kach movement were arrested for planning a similar bomb attack. I don't want to convey the impression that I think that Israel is Disneyland with a national flag or anything. The Agence France-Press report on the arrests quoted Motti Karpel, spokesman for families of the suspects from the Bat Ayin settlement south of Bethlehem, as saying, "There is no real evidence against them. After two weeks of interrogation in Shin Bet cellars without having seen a lawyer, anyone would admit to anything, even murdering Jesus." It could be a legitimate quote, but it also looks like it could be the work of those wacky anti-Semites, the French.

The settlements are a huge problem. According to the same article

> *The Jewish settlement population has doubled to 380,000 since the 1993 Oslo accord established the Palestinian Authority, Israeli rights groups say. Helped by lucrative government incentives, it grew nearly 4% last year even as Palestinian-Israeli violence raged.*

The settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, it seems to me, constitute the closest approach of the Israelis to fundamental incoherence when coupled with their continued negotiation over the "disputed territories". If you intend to give someone a plot of land, you don't tell him you'll give him the land and then build yourself a house on it. What it looks like to me is an attempt on the part of the Israelis to tie their own hands in negotiations over the West Bank and Gaza, to allow them to negotiate a turnover of all or part of the disputed territories while making the actual implementation of such a turnover severely problematical. At the same time, driving the Arabs back into Jordan with suburbs ("Back! BACK!") has about as much chance of success as the Arabs have of driving the Israelis into the Mediterranean by

blowing themselves up next to them. It seems to me that when the time comes—and I believe the time is coming sooner rather than later—the Israelis will have to adopt the approach taken with the Blue Line in Lebanon. That is, some other entity, whether the United States or the UN will have to be the ones to draw the line and say, "level everything on this side of the line." And will possibly have to volunteer for the onerous task of ejecting the settlers and bulldozing the actual buildings into the ground. This situation might be eased, somewhat, if the proposal to build a huge security fence in the West Bank gains momentum in Israel (which I hope it will). The extremists among the Israeli settlers (or is that redundant?) will be more likely, I think, to surrender their homes to create a buffer zone and build a security fence than they will be to handing their homes over to the Arabs.

That the "Palestinians" have retreated to the repeated use of the "Jesus Card" as a "court of last resort" in their dealings with the Jews—essentially endeavouring to make of themselves a pseudo-nation of Martyrs and to thus render their circumstance analogous in the Christian mind to that of the founder of the elder religion ('Them lousy Jews, they're picking on the Palestinians the same way they picked on Jesus!") seems to me irrefutable. The underlying motivation of their strange choice of tactic (and I think everyone would have to admit that it's a strange choice of tactic), I think can be attributed to a "paper/rock/scissors" game of "musical chairs" (a conscious mixing of metaphors). I believe that the Arab/Muslim mind, now firmly wedded to its Koreish manifestation, views the UN's creation of the State of Israel as analogous to the *hejira* of Muhammad and his followers to Medina, that is, as a sneaky Jewish misappropriation of the successful Muslim tactic of 622 of departing Mecca and taking up residence in Medina. A very, very, very successful tactic, as it turned out. In Mecca, Muhammad and his Muslims had always been an annoying, but (for the most part) easily dealt with marginal minority. A description which matches that of the Jews' situation in the Diaspora in Arab/Muslim lands. They were annoying, but they were an easily dealt with minority population. Once they were restored to Jerusalem, however: once the UN had officially declared the former territory of "Palestine" to be the State of Israel—just as Muhammad had officially founded the Nation of God in Medina—they were both more annoying and what was infinitely worse, from a Koreish vantage-point (in both instances), they were no longer easily dealt with. In fact, each effort to deal with them led to failure, *diminishing* the Koreish even as it *strengthened* their quarry. What, I believe, truly terrifies the Koreish-like despots and dictators of the Arab League is that at some point Israel is going to "break forth"—just as Muhammad and the Muslims did—and basically steam-roll right over the entire Arab Penninsula—just as Muhammad and the Muslims did—without even breaking a sweat—just as Muhammad and the Muslims didn't. And I think, at a vital, central level of the Arab Muslim awareness, they know that there is absolutely nothing that they can do about it, just as there was nothing the original Koreish could do about Muhammad and the Muslims. Once they were in Medina, the end was inevitable. Consequently, I think, at a vital, central level of Arab/Muslim awareness—desperate for some kind of a saving solution—they asked themselves, What can stop the Jews? And the answer they came up with was Jesus: or, more specifically, martyrdom. Historically, I think they're right. The only thing that has *ever* stopped the Jews (apart from their own stupid insistence on having an earthly king, instead of relying on God's prophets and messengers) *was* Jesus. This is the reason that I think only a permanent border in the form of a Berlin Wall-style security fence and the dismantling of a certain number of the settlements is the only thing that is going to (even marginally) put the Koreish-minds of the Arab despots at rest. It has to be demonstrated that Israel has no intention, now or in the future, of "breaking forth" and steam-rolling over the Arab-Muslim lands. The settlements in the West Bank and Gaza constitute "breaking forth". Granted, "breaking forth" in very, very slow motion, but "breaking forth" nonetheless.

Okay. Back to Islam.

In my view, the news is not all bad when it comes to Islam, although its negative aspects can't—and *shouldn't*—be overlooked, most particularly the seemingly insurmountable problem of the exporting of Wahabite Islam into the modern, secular world. Robert Fulford had an interesting column for 4 May ("An Imam dares to say what Islam should be") with some observations from Sheikh Abdul Hadi Palazzi, an imam who serves as secretary general of the Italian Muslim Association in Rome:

> *Islamic countries were not always oppressive. In fact, Islam came early to the idea of freedom, earlier than Christianity. Three centuries ago, many Jews considered Islamic societies safe havens. Bernard Lewis, the great historian, wrote recently that Islamic countries in the Middle Ages "achieved a freedom of thought and expression that led persecuted Jews and even dissident Christians to flee Christendom for refuge in Islam."*

The world judges Israel harshly, he says, and the world is dead wrong: "The right of self-defence is permitted to every country in the world except Israel." He thinks Israel deserves to exist, that the Koran mandates Jewish control of Jerusalem (so long as Islamic holy sites are respected), that peace will not come until the PLO is dismantled ("supporting the PLO is supporting massacres"), and that Yasser Arafat is a gangster. Why, Sheikh Palazzi asks, was the world not delighted when the Israelis pinned him down in his headquarters? In the Sheikh's view, people should have said: "Thank God Arafat is imprisoned. Now let us try him for 40 years of terrorism."

With the help of the British Empire, Ibn Saud rebuilt his ancestral domain and named it Saudi Arabia, with Wahhabism as its way of religious life. As Sheikh Palazzi has put it, "The Wahhabis first conquered the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, transforming these two sanctuaries into places for propagating a primitive and literalist cult to Muslims coming from every part of the world."

For reasons Sheikh Palazzi cannot fathom, the world has decided not to think much about the fact that the Sept. 11 terrorists were mostly Saudis. In his view, "It is as if people said Japan had nothing to do with Pearl Harbor. Imagine how the Saudi princes feel. They say to themselves, 'We kill thousands of Americans and now they welcome us as men of peace.'"

"Many of us are now ready to admit that hostility for Israel has been a great mistake, perhaps the worst mistake Muslims have made in the last 50 years."

Amir Taheri is another Muslim, an Iranian author and journalist and editor of the Paris-based *Politque Internationale*, who wrestles publicly with many of the conflicts within Islam and within the Arab world:

The oil bonanza of the 1980s helped create a middle class that promptly dispatched its children to study in American schools and universities. Saudis with some American education now number almost 200,000 in a native population of less than 15 million.

Many of the 126 Saudi intellectuals who issued a virulent anti-U.S. petition recently are either American-educated and/or have children attending U.S. schools. "We are like a touring theatrical troupe," says a Saudi female writer. "Half of the year we are acting as pure Arabs, veil and all, in our country. The other half we put on Western clothes and act the normal part in Europe or America.".

This last excerpt is perhaps more self-revelatory than the Saudi female writer intended (I'm assuming that she is one of the 126 Saudi intellectuals cited). Note particularly her characterization of putting on the veil as "acting as pure Arabs" as contrasted with putting on Western clothes to "act the *normal* part in Europe or America" (italics mine). Even as a dissident, as an anti-American, she recognizes that Western dress is more *normal* than Arab attire. Her studious (dare I say it?) secular left-liberal, quasi-socialist female nature still tilts towards the West once she has been exposed to it, despite her best efforts to portray the scrupulous (and, I would maintain, artificial) even-handedness that is the hallmark of left-liberal, quasi-socialism. This exposure to the West, through television, movies, the internet, and all other forms of popular culture, in my view, is the Cultural Trojan Horse which proves the undoing of all antithecal cultures with which comes into contact. In fact, in my view, Islam is only the latest worldwide recipient/victim of this Trojan Horse effect. The last one was communism, which effectively ceased to exist once it had contracted the virus. Before that it was Europe. Europe hated it. The communists hated it. The Muslims hate it. Doesn't matter it you hate it. Once you've got it, you are effectively done for. You can sign all the virulent anti-American petitions you want, you will still scramble to see the latest American film, to buy the latest American pop culture junk. And if you won't, your kids will, just to piss you off. And if *your* kids won't, the odds are that they will be the only "weirdo's" among their peers who won't. I have found that Western feminist outrage at the *burqa* quickly subsides when you ask what they would suggest Orthodox Muslim women should wear instead. Mini-skirts? Guess jeans? Thongs? In an earlier piece ("Solutions to Islam's crisis lies within") Mr. Taheri, to me, touches on the effects of this Trojan Horse juggernaut with a litany of woeful statistics about the Muslim world: while Muslims

account for almost a quarter of mankind, their share of the global wealth is less than 6%. Nearly two-thirds of the world's poorest, those who live on under $2 a day, are Muslim, while not a single Muslim country figures among the world's 30 richest nations. Of the 5,000 world-class brand products, not one is produced in a Muslim country. Iran's President Khatami laments the brain drain that is forcing 1.2 million highly educated Muslims to immigrate to Europe, North America and other "Christian" lands such as Australia and New Zealand each year. (Again, it is only a Muslim who could describe Australia and New Zealand as "Christian" countries and keep a straight face: something I don't imagine any Aussie or New Zealander could manage without sneering)

What is interesting to me is the extent to which this "frames the debate in the aggressor's terms" (to borrow a phrase from earlier in this essay). All of these statistics center on materialism as the be-all and end-all or, at the very least, as a central consideration in measuring success and failure. It's hard for me to picture that, if the Prophet Muhammad were alive today, he would find any of these statistics troubling. Nor are there any suras in the Koran to support the view that one of our primary purposes in passing our brief, dream-like existence in this vale of tears which the Koran calls "the farmland of the hereafter" is to come up with a world-class brand product or to find away to suck up more than 6% of the world's wealth. In fact, the Koran is at great pains to remind us *repeatedly* that our wealth and our children are a trial for us, a temptation that can seduce the unwary away from the path of God.

> *...many of the intellectuals who have joined the "dirty linen" exercise, end their discourse with the assertion that "we have not been good Muslims." Their solution is to apply "true Islam." Each, of course, has his own definition of what a "good Muslim" is and what "true Islam" looks like. Some have come out with citations from the Holy Book and, by doing so, have defined themselves rather than the problems discussed.*
>
> *The result is a new form of obfuscation designed to theologize political problems and, thus, avoid the core issue that is the absence of democracy and the rule of law in most Muslim countries.*
>
> *Muslims need the exact opposite method of dealing with their problems: They need to de-theologize their politics and recognize the concept of the political as an independent category.*

That is, the separation of church and state. I think this is inescapable if you consider material prosperity to be a vital component of a successful society, a first priority. I think what escapes Mr. Taheri is that material prosperity has never been a centerpiece of Muslim life. From a Muslim standpoint, the fact that most of the world's Muslim population lives in a state of poverty is, inherently, a good thing. Fewer temptations, less corruption, individually and collectively. Arguably, the despotic, wealth-encrusted dictators in their palaces, from a Muslim standpoint, are "taking one for the team". Unlike the corrupted "Christian" countries, where materialism and decadence (in Orthodox Muslim terms) exist in virtually every household as a society-wide infection that spares so few and that is resisted by only the merest handful of citizens, in the Muslim lands, it is materialism, decadence and corruption which are confined to the merest handful of citizens, the dictator, his cronies, and their families. There are extremes involved, of course. Mr. Taheri asks why it is that Algeria—which has energy export revenues of $20 billion a year—can't provide drinking water for its capital. The issue, it seems to me, is one of how far—and for what reason—a Muslim nation will allow technical innovation, materialism and corruption to intrude within it. On an individual basis, everyone is confronted with these compound dilemmas (whether they acknowledge it or not). Anyone who owns a computer has to decide if he or she is going to get hooked up to the Internet, if they are going to allow the internet access to their private residence. If yes, they then confront the question of how much of their time they are going to allow the Internet to occupy. As with any other potent societal force it can come as a complete surprise that an "Internet addiction" does not remain within the confines one intends. The decision is made to sit down for an hour and four hours go by without any awareness on the part of the decision-maker. When the societal force in question is alcohol, that sort of "loss of control' is called (rightly, in my view) alcoholism.

[For men, Internet access also implies granting porno sites access to your residence, which implies the question of whether you will or won't allow yourself to "visit" them, how often you'll allow yourself to "visit" them, which ones you will allow yourself to "visit," how much money you'll allow yourself to spend on them. If you intend most of the time *not* to "visit" porno sites (but do), intend to "visit" only softcore sites (but "visit" hardcore sites, s&m sites, kiddie porn sites, bestiality and other perversion sites), intend to limit your visits to an hour (but often put in three hours or more), intend to spend only a

few dollars (and end up spending hundreds) to me, again, this is analogous to alcoholism. In terms of porno sites being a potent societal force—the billions upon billions of dollars of revenue which they generate is proof of that—I think it far more accurate to say that the porno sites "visit" men, not the other way around. And those porno sites visit you *only* at your invitation].

In my own life, I chose to get rid of my television, my CD player and my CD's, my tape deck, my tuner, my VCR and my videotapes. In my own view, relative to myself, I saw them as being in the "alcohol and gambling" category as described in the Koran. They had their benefits, which I could happily enumerate and use to rationalize hanging onto them and they had their drawbacks which, to me, inescapably outweighed their benefits. I could have hung onto all of them. I also could have bought a DVD player and 800 DVD's, a computer, a modem and gotten hooked up to the Internet to add to the pile of techno-crap I already had. I could also have started smoking again. I could also have gone back to hitting the bars four or five nights out of the week instead of just on Friday. Instead, I chose to go the other way, getting things out of my life instead of trying to find more things to graft onto it.

I never once considered getting rid of my toilet, however. Nor did I consider for a moment living without electricity.

In a nutshell, I think this is the problem which is facing the Muslim nations. In one of the earliest dispatches "on the ground" from Kandahar, a reporter outlined the problems involved in finding Internet access to file his reports and described being led by one of the natives down various alleyways and up and down stairways until they came to a large room filled with computer terminals, a completely underground, completely illicit operation—reportedly the *only* place in Afghanistan with access to the Internet— from which he could e-mail his report to his newspaper. According to his article, before each computer terminal sat an Afghani in approved Muslim garb, with an untrimmed beard as required by the Taliban's interpretation of *schariat* law, scrolling through porno sites.

Is it possible to pick and choose? Can a Muslim country use its oil wealth to develop a reliable source of electrical power for its populace, provide its populace with indoor plumbing, clean hot and cold running water, modern sanitation facilities, good roads, modest housing and a flourishing marketplace for fresh produce at affordable prices? And then *stop* there? Or do you really, really have to have Julia Roberts, AC/DC, *Star Wars,* 'n' Sync, Ally McBeal, 'Slutty Co-Eds Strip 4 U" and all the rest of it along for the ride?

As I said earlier in this series, I think democracy is favoured by God over theocracy for the exact reason that it represents the institutionalizing of "free will" as a centerpiece of human existence. The whole point of democracy is to guarantee that everyone gets to choose exactly what they want to do, what they want to think, how they want to live, what they will allow themselves to do and what they won't allow themselves to do—whether that's drinking too much, eating too much, watching fifty uninterrupted hours of *The Beverly Hillbillies* on a cable channel over a holiday weekend or losing their children's trust funds playing blackjack in Vegas. For many (if not most) this also involves choosing which laws they will allow themselves to break—by smoking marijuana, drinking and driving, cheating on their taxes, using prostitutes. The word of the angel spoken to the shepherds in Luke's Gospel, in announcing Jesus' birth (you remember, *A Charlie Brown Christmas?*), "Peace on earth, good will to all men." This, to me, is God's declaration of intent to us both individually, as human beings, and collectively, as society. We all have *free* will, we are all *free* to make our choices. What God wishes for us is that we make of our *free* will, *good* will. That we make not only *free* choices, but *good* choices. By the grace of God, I am free to choose to drink a 26er of vodka tonight. Drinking it constitutes an act of *free* will. *Not* drinking it constitutes an act of *good* will. The failing that I see in Islam is that—in those countries which *impose shariat* law on the entire population, that vital component of choice is removed. To me, it is a central consideration of the on-going debate between good (God's viewpoint) and evil (God's adversary's viewpoint) that the former holds that human beings are "all or mostly good" and the latter holds that human beings are "all or mostly evil". In a real sense, those societies which impose the strictest rules on their citizenry, and who use the most Draconian methods to enforce those rules (totalitarian governments, both fascistic and communist, Wahabite Muslim societies) in a very real sense, are arguing the "evil" side of the debate, not just "playing" but literally *being* devil's advocate. It is a centrepiece of the jurisprudence of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as an example, that religious police are a necessity and that they need to be given a free hand in policing the religious habits of the populace—literally dragging people out of their homes and to the mosques for the mandated *salat,* prayers. Like God's adversary, they believe that without strict rules and without the strict enforcement of those strict rules men will choose to do evil every time. God's view (I believe) is exactly the opposite. Very few rules, very few guide-

lines. "Thou shalt not kill," "thou shalt not steal." Even in the Koran, in those verses which address gambling and alcohol, the revelation is limited to "they have benefits and they have drawbacks. The drawbacks outweigh the benefits." I don't think God intends for gambling and alcohol to be illegal. In fact, I think alcohol exists for the exact reason that it represents so much that we don't understand about ourselves. If I did buy that 26er of vodka and took it home and just popped it open and chugged it down. No mix, no glass, no ice cubes. Just glug glug glug. I'd get alcohol poisoning. The odds are that I would die. That's just one bottle. There are a dozen liquor stores in this town. Each one with hundreds and hundreds of bottles of pure or virtually pure alcohol. All of it perfectly legal. I can walk into any one of them any minute of any day and buy enough alcohol to kill myself. And no one would bat an eye. I've known two guys who—literally—drank themselves to death. Not figuratively, not metaphorically. *Literally*. If you live in a society where you are allowed to do that—as everyone reading this does—then you know something about yourself that a person in a Wahabite Muslim society doesn't know about him or herself. That is: "I wouldn't do that. I'm not that stupid." You don't have to threaten me with a flogging, I know, alcohol is dangerous stuff. But, then, many of us overdo it from time to time—and that gives us a self-knowledge that you don't have in a Wahabite Muslim society: alcohol is dangerous at many different levels and in many different ways. I don't know those levels and ways as well as I thought I did. I don't know myself as well as I thought I did. I can intend *good* will (I'll just have a couple of beers) and end up succumbing to *bad* will (what do you mean, "Last call"?). The road to hell is actually paved with *bad* intentions that started out as *good* intentions and then were changed through the conscious decisions, the conscious exercise of free-will decisions, by each individual. I believe God's view is that *overall* we are getting better. The average human being in the 21st century is a better human being than the average human being in, say, the 12th century. Not just in terms of health, nutrition, income and living standards but in the debate between good and evil, where those are largely irrelevant (there are a lot of healthy, well-fed, rich, evil people living in mansions). Contrast the reaction to Pearl Harbour—the unconscionable, unlawful, but at the time almost *universally approved of* internment of Japanese-American citizens—with the reaction to the bombing of the World Trade Center and the Pentagon—the internment of those Arabs and Arab-American citizens linked to radical Islamic terrorist groups, an infinitismal fraction of the Arab population and the Arab-American population. Painstaking efforts made to maintain the safety and security of the majority while guaranteeing the inalienable rights of *virtually* every individual. God has every confidence in us. We make mistakes, sure. We're human. The indiscriminate internment of Japanese-Americans was evil, but it was an evil which was an honest mistake. We learned. When the time came, the mistake was not repeated. This, I think, is the answer to the plaintive cry of the agnostic, the atheist and the disappointed deist: "if God is good, how can he allow so much evil to exist?" God *is* good. If He were to interfere *monumentally* in human affairs—sending a legion of Angels, as an example, to steamroll the Nazis as they swept into Poland in September of 1939—he would be conceding his adversary's point: human beings need outside help because they are *intrinsically* evil, if God doesn't interfere they will destroy everyone and everything around them, and ultimately themselves. There *was* a lot of evil unleashed upon the European continent from 1939 to 1945. In human terms, an *unimaginable* level of human suffering: in London during the Blitz, in Stalingrad during the seige, during the fire-bombing of Dresden, in the death camps, on the Bataan Death March, in Hiroshima and in Nagasaki. All of it unleashed as a consequence of individual human choices, the exercise of free will by Adolf Hitler, Winston Churchill, Joseph Stalin, Hermann Goering, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Irwin Rommel, Eisenhower, Adolf Eichman, Oppenheimer, Einstein, Mussolini. God, in his omniscience, knew exactly what role each of those individuals was *likely* to play and knew the likelihood of the consequences of each decision which led to each subsequent decision. God Knew that the Physics problems Albert Einstein was whittling away at in the 1920s would *in all probability* lead to the bombing of a major Japanese city in the 1940s. But He also knew that—despite the monstrous toll in human suffering that would take place as a result of all those cumulative human choices—that the Second World War would only be, roughly, six years long (four years in American dollars. Nyuck nyuck nyuck). Which compares quite favourably with the *Hundred Years* War fought between England and France from 1337 to 1453. We make mistakes. We are human. We are not God. But we learn, and we improve. Six years of war is better than a hundred years of war. The invention of the atomic bomb and its use against the civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki was, I believe, a critical moment in the debate between good and evil, the on-going debate between God and his adversary. An even more critical moment came when the Soviet Union successfully tested its own thermonuclear device in 1953. At that point, with the Promethean Myth writ large in crimson letters, from the standpoint of God's adversary, it was inevitable

that God would have to interfere in human affairs. If He doesn't they will blow each other to bits. The appropriateness of the acronym MAD applies here: Mutually Assured Destruction, the central fact of life on planet earth from 1953 to 1989. Almost forty years. And yet God won his point with the Cuban Missile Crisis in October of 1962. Right to the very brink of thermonuclear war and STILL, still no interference from God. And the Soviet ships turned around. Even a wholly Godless State backed down from the precipice of evil. God won his point. Human beings are not MAD and we are not evil. We are good. God knows. God made us that way. We make mistakes. We're human. But we learn from those mistakes. And, overall, we're getting better all the time. Americans (as an example) can have a hundred, five hundred, a thousand, two thousand, five thousand missiles with thermonuclear warheads pointed at their most hated adversary. And they can't push the button. Why? Because they're good. Nothing, I don't believe, would ever again compel the only nation to launch a nuclear strike in anger to repeat that action. Why? Because they're good. Nothing would ever again compel them to imprison an entire population based solely on race. Why? Because they're good. This is God's thesis, I believe. The only way to prove its veracity is for God to not interfere, to send prophets and messengers delivering the same basic message—and then to stop sending them and to allow all the ensuing generations from 632 A.D. to Judgement Day to work everything out, working to understand free will, working to enshrine it in the rule of law, to progressively limit those actions which can be taken by any individual or by the state *against* any other individual or group's expression of free will and, by painful progressions of three-steps-forward-two-steps-back—progress that in some centuries can be measured in inches and in some decades can be measured in miles—to allow us all to make our own free will choices and to—individually and collectively—make *good will* choices. To make our own mistakes, individually and collectively, to suffer the consequences of those mistakes, to pick ourselves up in the aftermath of our individual and collective mistakes, to dust ourselves off and to, individually and collectively, continue our forward march of progress.

It seems to me that what unites the great democracies (those "nations formerly known as Christendom") is a fundamental belief in using the instruments of government and society to protect by law and—if necessary—by force of arms the expression of free will choices. In any of the great democracies, any Muslim who wants to pretend that he is living in Medina in the seventh century is free to do so. Up to a point. If he catches his wife cheating on him, he can't, with impunity, stone her to death—nor can he have his neighbour publicly whipped for drinking a beer or buying a lottery ticket. The great democracies are historically tolerant with those things taking place in a Muslim country. For a country's population to accept some oil sheik's interpretation and imposition upon them of his own interpretation of *shariat* law (and there are as many interpretations of *shariat* law as there are Muslim states) is both their individual and collective free-will choice. It is only when Wahabism or any of its variants begin to spread *outside* of a Muslim country and *within* great democracies—violating the free-will choices of others by flying them into the side of the World Trade Centre or blowing babies into so much ground beef because their mother picked the wrong outdoor market in Jaffa Street to do some window-shopping—that force must needs be met with force. For force to sustain itself to the degree necessary for the great democracies to prevail requires, I believe, an unshakeable conviction that it is right to defend democracy against assaults upon it, an unshakeable conviction that the difference between 11 September and the latest suicide bombing in the "disputed territories" is one of degree only and (the central consideration) an unshakeable conviction that—while "might" does not necessarily "make right," "might" is not, by implicit definition, "wrong" (the bedrock belief of those whose reaction to a crisis is to stand there with their mouths agape and tears streaming down their cheeks). Eradicating fascism was a very good idea and was accomplished in no small part through the exertion of superior "might". Those forms of Wahabism which are not content to confine themselves to advocacy by all ancient and modern forms of communication but which seek to kill innocent people in the *name* of Wahabism, it seems to me, are well worth eradicating. Whether the great democracies are capable of maintaining that degree of conviction necessary for the arduous task of ridding the world of terrorist Wahabism (or whether a quorum of their citizens is even capable of using a term like "great democracy" without getting a left-liberal, quasi-socialist sneer on their faces) will be the subject of the concluding instalment of "Islam, My Islam".

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